IMPRESSIONS OF UKIYO-YE

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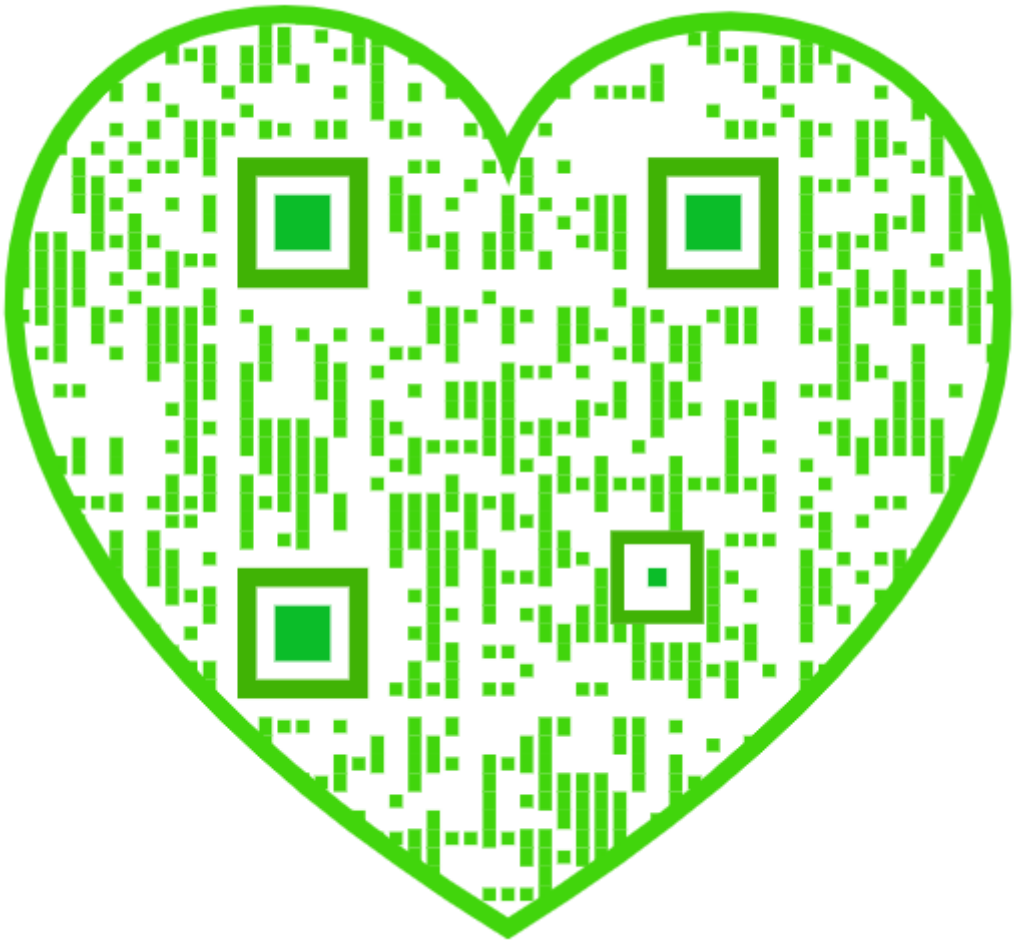

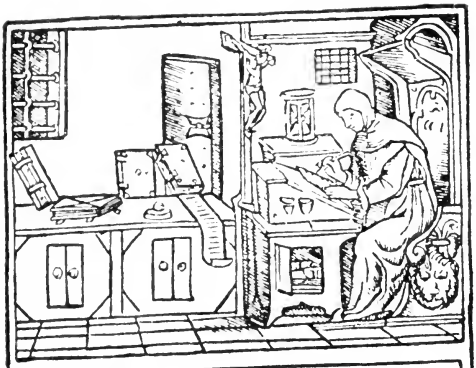

For out of olde feldes as men seith
Cometh al this newe corn fro yeer to yere
And out of olde bokes in good feith
Cometh al this newe science that men lere

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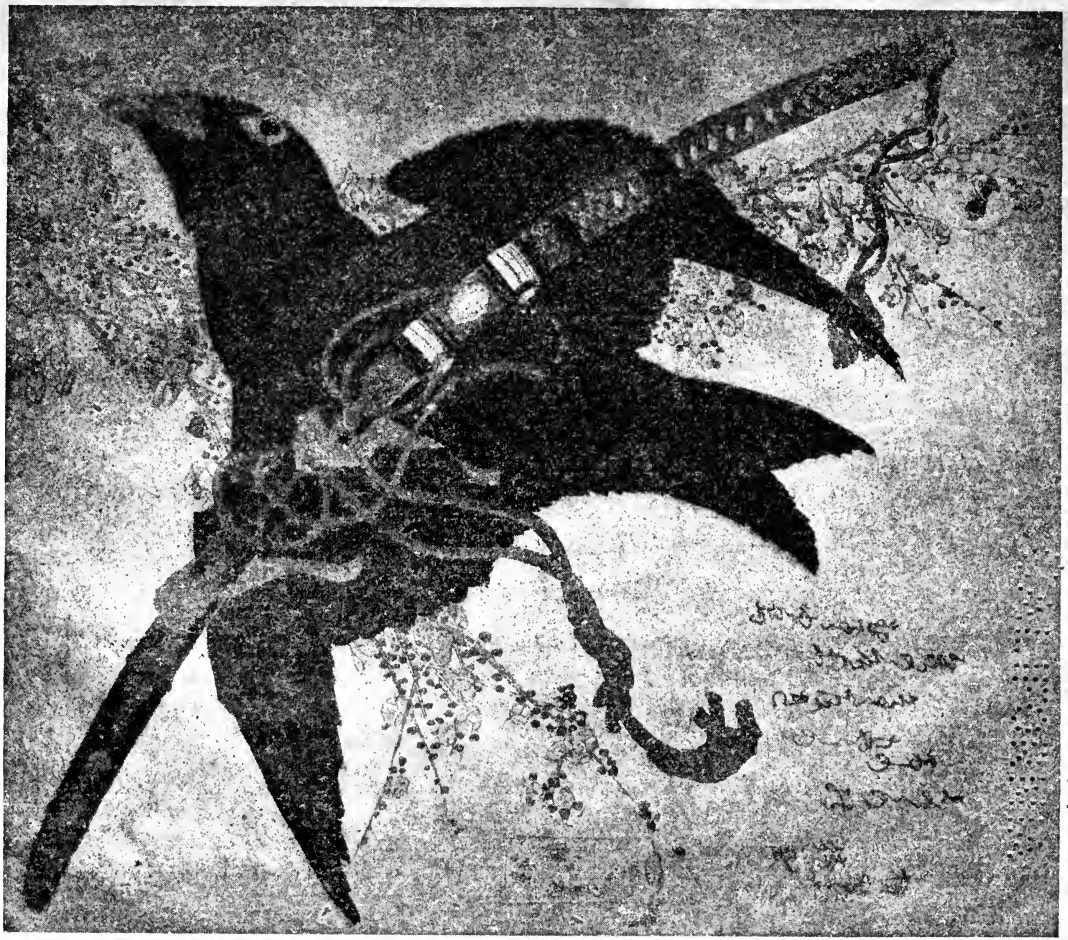

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On the reverse.

Surimono:
A Crow Stealing a Sword.
This sword is a famous heirloom of the ancient house of Genji, described in the old romance known as "Genji Monogatori."
By Hokusai.

Biwa, the Beautiful Lake, so named from its resemblance in form to the Four-stringed Lute. By Hiroshige I.

廣重画

IMPRESSIONS OF UKIYO-YE

THE SCHOOL OF THE JAPANESE COLOUR-PRINT ARTISTS

BY

DORA AMSDEN

The things of Heaven
and of Buddha: The Life of Men
and Women.
—From the Mang-wa of Hokusai.

PAUL ELDER AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS, SAN FRANCISCO

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TO
MY BROTHER AND BEST FRIEND
CHARLES WATSON JACKSON

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The Rise of Ukiyo-ye.

The Floating World.

THE Art of Ukiyo-ye is a "spiritual rendering of the realism and naturalness of the daily life, intercourse with nature, and imaginings, of a lively impressionable race, in the full tide of a passionate craving for art." This characterization of Jarves sums up forcibly the motive of the masters of Ukiyo-ye, the Popular School of Japanese Art, so poetically interpreted "The Floating World."

To the Passionate Pilgrim, and devotee of nature and art, who has visited the enchanted Orient, it is unnecessary to prepare the way for the proper understanding of Ukiyo-ye. This joyous idealist trusts less to dogma than to impressions. "I know nothing of Art, but I know what I like," is the language of sincerity, sincerity which does not take a stand upon creed or tradition, nor upon cut and dried principles and conventions. It is truly said that "they alone can pretend to fathom the depth of feeling and beauty in an alien art, who resolutely determine to scrutinize it from the point of view of an inhabitant of the place of its birth."

To the born cosmopolite, who assimilates alien ideas by instinct, or the gauging power of his sub-conscious intelligence, the feat is easy, but to the less intuitively gifted, it is necessary to serve a novitiate, in order to appreciate "a wholly recalcitrant element like Japanese Art, which at once demands attention, and defies judgment upon accepted theories." These sketches are not an individual expression, but an endeavour to give in condensed form the opinions of those qualified by study and research to speak with authority upon the form of Japanese Art, which

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in its most concrete development the Ukiyo-ye print is now claiming the attention of the art world.

The development of colour printing is, however, only the objective symbol of Ukiyo-ye, for, as our Western oracle, Professor Fenollosa, said, "The true history of Ukiyo-ye, although including prints as one of its most fascinating diversions, is not a history of the technical art of printing, rather an æsthetic history of a peculiar kind of design."

The temptation to make use of one more quotation, in concluding these introductory remarks, is irresistible, for in it Walter Pater sets his seal upon art as a legitimate pursuit, no matter what form it takes, though irreconcilable with preconceived ideas and traditions. "The legitimate contention is not of one age or school of art against another, but of all successive schools alike, against the stupidity which is dead to the substance, and the vulgarity which is dead to form."

As the Popular School (Ukiyo-ye) was the outcome of over a thousand years of growth, it is necessary to glance back along the centuries in order to understand and follow the processes of its development.

Though the origin of painting in Japan is shrouded in obscurity, and veiled in tradition, there is no doubt that China and Corea were the direct sources from which she derived her art; whilst more indirectly she was influenced by Persia and India,—the sacred fount of oriental art,—as of religion, which ever went hand in hand.

In China, the Ming dynasty gave birth to an original style, which for centuries dominated the art of Japan; the sweeping calligraphic strokes of Hokusai mark the sway of hereditary influence, and his wood-cutters,

trained to follow the graceful fluent lines of his purely Japanese work, were staggered by his sudden flights into angular realism.

The Rise of Ukiyo-ye.

The Chinese and Buddhist schools of art dated from the sixth century, and in Japan the Emperor Heizei founded an imperial academy in 808. This academy, and the school of Yamato, founded by Motomitsu in the eleventh century, led up to the celebrated school of Tosa, which with Kano, its august and aristocratic rival, held undisputed supremacy for centuries, until challenged by plebeian Ukiyo-ye, the school of the common people of Japan.

Tosa has been characterized as the "manifestation of ardent faith, through the purity of an ethereal style." Tosa represented the taste of the court of Kyoto, and was relegated to the service of the aristocracy; it reflected the esoteric mystery of Shinto and the hallowed entourage of the divinely descended Mikado. The ceremonial of the court, its fêtes and religious solemnities,— dances attended by daimios, in robes of state falling in full harmonious folds,—were depicted with consummate elegance and delicacy of touch, which betrayed familiarity with the occult methods of Persian miniature painting. The Tosa artists used very fine, pointed brushes, and set off the brilliance of their colouring with resplendent backgrounds in gold leaf, and it is to Tosa we owe the intricate designs, almost microscopic in detail, which are to be seen upon the most beautiful specimens of gold lacquer work; and screens, which for richness have never been surpassed.

Japanese Art was ever dominated by the priestly hierarchy, and also by temporal rulers, and of this the school of Tosa was a noted example, as it received its title from the painter-prince, Tsunetaka, who, besides

The Rise of Ukiyo-ye.

being the originator of an artistic centre, held the position of vice-governor of the province of Tosa. From its incipience, Tosa owed its prestige to the Mikado and his nobles, as later Kano became the official school of the usurping Shoguns. Thus the religious, political and artistic history of Japan were ever closely allied. The Tosa style was combated by the influx of Chinese influence, culminating in the fourteenth century, in the rival school of Kano. The school of Kano owed its origin to China. At the close of the fourteenth century the Chinese Buddhist priest, Josetsu, left his own country for Japan, and bringing with him Chinese tradition, he founded a new dynasty whose descendants still represent the most illustrious school of painting in Japan. The Kano school to this day continues to be the stronghold of classicism, which in Japan signifies principally adherence to Chinese models, a traditional technique, and avoidance of subjects which represent everyday life. The Chinese calligraphic stroke lay at the root of the technique of Kano, and the Japanese brush owed its facility elementarily to the art of writing. Dexterous handling of the brush is necessary to produce these bold, incisive strokes, and the signs of the alphabet require little expansion to resolve themselves into draped forms, and as easily they can be decomposed into their abstract element.

Walter Crane inculcates the wisdom of this method for preliminary practice with the brush in his valuable study, "Line and Form," but the Chinese and Japanese ideographs give a far wider scope to initial brush work.

The early artists of Kano reduced painting to an academic art, and destroyed naturalism, until the genius of Masanobu, who gave his name to the school, and still more, that of his son, Motonobu, the real "Kano,"

grafted on to Chinese models, and monotony of monochrome, a warmth of colour and harmony of design which regenerated and revivified the whole system. Kano yielded to Chinese influence, Tosa combated it, and strove for a purely national art, Ukiyo-ye bridged the chasm, and became the exponent of both schools, bringing about an expansion in art which could never have been realized by these aristocratic rivals. The vigour and force of the conquering Shoguns led Kano, while the lustre of Tosa was an emanation from the sanctified and veiled Mikado.

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The favourite subjects of the Kano painters were chiefly Chinese saints and philosophers, mythological and legendary heroes, represented in various attitudes with backgrounds of conventional clouds and mists, interspersed with symbolical emblems. Many of the Kano saints and heroes bear a striking resemblance to mediæval subjects, as they are often represented rising from billowy cloud masses, robed in ethereal draperies, and with heads encircled by the nimbus.

Space will not permit a glance at the personnel of the many schools of Japanese Art. A lengthy catalogue alone would be required to enumerate the masters who inaugurated schools, for if an artist developed exceptional talent in Japan, he immediately founded an individual school, and it was incumbent upon his descendants for generations to adhere rigidly to the principles he had inculcated, so becoming slaves to traditional methods.

During the anarchy of the fourteenth century art stagnated in Japan, but a revival, corresponding with our European Renaissance, followed. The fifteenth century in Japan, as in Europe, was essentially the age of revival. Wm. Anderson epitomizes in one pregnant phrase this working

The Rise of Ukiyo-ye.

power: "All ages of healthy human prosperity are more or less revivals. A little study would probably show that the Ptolemaic era in Egypt was a renaissance of the Theban age, in architecture as in other respects, while the golden period of Augustus in Rome was largely a Greek revival." There seems ever to have been a reciprocal action in Japanese Art. Tosa, famed for delicacy of touch, minutiæ of detail and brilliance of colour, yielded to the black and white, vigorous force of Kano. Kanoagain was modified by the glowing colouring introduced by Kano Masanobu and Motonobu. Later we see the varied palette of Miyagawa Choshun efface the monochromic simplicity of Moronobu, the ringleader of the printers of Ukiyo-ye.

The leading light in art in the beginning of the fifteenth century was Cho Densu, the Fra Angelico of Japan, who, a simple monk, serving in a Kyoto temple, must in a trance of religious and artistic ecstasy have beheld a spectrum of fadeless dyes, so wondrous were the colours he lavished upon the draperies of his saints and sages. The splendour of this beatific vision has never faded, for the masters who followed in the footsteps of the inspired monk reverently preserved the secret of these precious shades, till at last, in the form of the Ukiyo-ye print, they were sown broadcast, and revolutionized the colour sense of the art world.

It has been remarked that Japanese Art of the nineteenth century is often nothing but a reproduction of the works of the ancient great masters, and the methods and mannerisms of the fifteenth century artists have ever served as examples for later students. The glory of the fifteenth century was increased by Mitsonobu of Tosa, and above all by the two great Kano artists, Masanobu and his son Motonobu, who

received the title of "Hogan," and is referred to as "Ko Hogan," or the ancient Hogan, of whom it has been remarked, "He filled the air with luminous beams."

The Rise of Ukiyo-ye.

By the close of the fifteenth century the principles of art in Japan became definitely fixed, as, almost contemporaneously, Giotto established a canon of art in Florence, which he, in turn, had received from the Attic Greeks, through Cimabue, and which was condensed by Ruskin into a grammar of art, under the term "Laws of Fesole."

The two great schools, Tosa and Kano, flourished independently until the middle of the eighteenth century, when the genius of the popular artists, forming the school of Ukiyo-ye, gradually fused the traditions of Tosa and Kano, absorbing the methods of these rival schools,—which, differing in technique and motive, were united in their proud disdain of the new art which dared to represent the manners and customs of the common people. Harunobu and Hokusai, Kiyonaga and Hiroshige were the crowning glory of all the schools,—the artists whose genius told the story of their country, day by day, weaving a century of history into one living encyclopedia, sumptuous in form, kaleidoscopic in colour.

Ukiyo-ye prepared Japan for intercourse with other nations by developing in the common people an interest in other countries, in science and foreign culture, and by promoting the desire to travel, through the means of illustrated books of varied scenes. To Ukiyo-ye, the Japanese owed the gradual expansion of international consciousness, which culminated in the revolution of 1868,—a revolution, the most astonishing in history, accomplished as if by miracle; but the esoteric germ of this seemingly spontaneous growth of Meiji lay in the atelier of the artists of Ukiyo-ye.

IMPRESSIONS OF UKIYO-YE

The Rise of Ukiyo-ye.

To trace the evolution of the Popular School in its development through nearly three centuries is a lengthy study, of deep interest. The mists of uncertainty gather about the lives of many apostles of Ukiyo-ye, from the originator, Iwasa Matahei, to Hiroshige, one of the latest disciples, whose changes of style and diversity of signature have given rise to the supposition that as many as three artists are entitled to the name. These mists of tradition cannot be altogether dispersed by such indefatigable students as M. Louis Gonse, Professor Fenollosa, M. Edmond de Goncourt, Wm. Anderson, and many others, but by their aid the methods of Oriental Art are clarified and explained.

Iwasa Matahei, the date of whose birth is given as 1578, is considered to be the originator of the Popular School. The spontaneous growth of great movements and the mystery of the source of genius are illustrated in the career of Matahei. His environment fitted him to follow in the footsteps of his master, Mitsunori of Tosa. Yet the city of Kyoto, veiled in mystic sanctity, where religion and princely patronage held art in conventional shackles, gave birth to the leader of the Popular School. Still, was not Kyoto, the sacred heart of Japan, a fit cradle for Ukiyo-ye, the life and soul of the Japanese people?

Matahei and his followers entered into the spirit of the Japanese temperament, and from the Popular School sprang liberty and a novelty of horizon. The aristocratic schools had confined themselves entirely to representations of princely pageantry, to portraiture, and to ideal pictures of mythical personages, saints and sages. Therefore Matahei was contemptuously disowned by Tosa for depicting scenes from the life of his countrymen, yet the technique of Kano and Tosa were the birthright of

the artists of Ukiyo-ye, an inalienable inheritance in form, into which they breathed the spirit of life, thus revivifying an art grown cold and academical, and frosted with tradition. The colouring of Kano had faded, tending continually toward monochrome, but the Ukiyo-ye painters restored the use of gorgeous pigments, preserving the glory of Kano Yeitoku, the court painter to Hideyoshi.

The Rise of Ukiyo-ye.

In the middle of the seventeenth century appeared Hishigawa Moronobu, considered by many to be the real founder of Ukiyo-ye. His genius welded with the new motif the use of the block for printing, an innovation which led to the most characteristic development in Ukiyo-ye art. This art of printing, which originated in China and Corea, had, until the beginning of the seventeenth century, been confined solely to the service of religion for the reproduction of texts and images, but Moronobu conceived the idea of using the form of printed book illustration, just coming into vogue, as a channel to set forth the life of the people. Besides painting and illustrating books, he began printing single sheets, occasionally adding to the printed outlines dashes of colour from the brush, principally in orange and green. These sheets, the precursors of the Ukiyo-ye prints, superseded the *Otsu-ye*,—impressionistic hand-paintings, draughted hastily for rapid circulation. The *Otsu-ye* were sometimes richly illuminated, the largest surfaces in the costumes being filled in with a ground of black lacquer, and ornamented with layers of gold leaf attached by varnish.

Moronobu acquired his technique from both Tosa and Kano, but was originally a designer for the rich brocades and tissues woven in Kyoto. He added to this art that of embroidery, and, leaving Kyoto,

The Rise of Ukiyo-ye.

took up this branch at the rival city Yedo, where all the arts and crafts were developing under the fostering care of the Tokugawa Shoguns, the dynasty with which Ukiyo-ye art is practically coextensive. It was Hishigawa Moronobu who designed for his countrywomen their luxurious trailing robes, with enormous sleeves, richly embroidered,—gorgeous and stately garments which he loved to reproduce on paper, with marvellous powers of sweeping line. As in all fashions of dress, in time the graceful lines became exaggerated until, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, they overstepped the limits of beauty, and approached the realm of caricature. Today, in the modern poster, we see perpetuated the degenerate offspring of the genius of Moronobu, of whom it is remarked that his enlarged compositions have the plasticity of bas-reliefs.

An artist who greatly influenced Moronobu was Tanyu of Kano, whose masterpiece may be seen at the great temple in Kyoto,—four painted panels of lions, of indescribable majesty. M. Louis Gonse tells us that one of Tanyu's kakemonos, belonging to a celebrated French painter, well sustains the test of comparison, with its companion pictures, in the artist's studio, by Durer, Rembrandt and Rubens. Under Tanyu's direction the task of reproducing the old masterpieces was undertaken. The artists of Ukiyo-ye were ever ready to profit by the teaching of all the schools; therefore, properly to follow the methods of the Popular School, we must study the work of the old masters and the subjects from which they derived their inspiration.

In this brief resumé we cannot follow the fluctuations of Japanese Art through the centuries. During long periods of conflict and bloody internecine strife, art languished; when peace reigned, then in the seclusion

of their *yasbikis* these fierce and princely warriors threw down their arms and surrendered themselves to the service of beauty and of art. Nor had the dainty inmates of their castles languished idly during these stirring times. Often they defended their honour and their homes against treacherous neighbors. It was a Japanese woman who led her conquering countrymen into Corea. In the arts of peace the cultured women of Japan kept pace with their lovers and husbands. A woman revised and enlarged the alphabet, and some of the most beautiful classic poems are ascribed to them. Well might the Japanese fight fiercely for his altar and home, with the thought of the flower-soft hands that were waiting to strip him of his armour and stifle with caresses the recollection of past conflict. The early history of Japan suggests a comparison with ancient Greece, and the Japanese poets might have apostrophized their country, as did Byron the land of his adoption.

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"The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,—
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!"

Happily Japan, unlike Greece, withstood the enervating influences of luxury and the passionate adoration of beauty. Princes laboured alike with chisel and with brush, and the loftiest rulers disdained not the tool of the artisan. Art Industrial kissed Grand Art, which remained virile beneath the sturdy benediction. Therefore Japan lives, unlike Greece, whose beauty in decay called forth that saddest of dirges, ending,

"'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more."

In Japan, art lightens the burden of labour, utility and beauty go hand in hand, and the essential and the real reach upward, and touch the beautiful and the ideal.

Genroku.

The Golden Era of Romance and Art.

THE Nen-go of Genroku, from 1688 to 1703, was that period of incomparable glory which the Japanese revere as the French do the time of Louis the Fourteenth. Peace had long reigned and art flourished under the fostering care of the Tokugawa Shoguns.

Then lived the great worker in lacquer, Korin, pupil of Sotatsu, the flower painter, unrivalled artists who had absorbed the secrets of both Kano and Tosa. Itcho, the grand colourist, flourished, and Kenzan, brother of Korin, the "Exponent in pottery decoration of the Korin School."

Yedo, the new capital of the usurping Tokugawas, now became the Mecca of genius, rivalling the ancient metropolis Kyoto, for the great Shoguns encouraged art in all forms, not disdaining to enroll themselves as pupils to the masters in painting and lacquer. The greatest ruler became one of the greatest artists, even assuming the art title of Sendai Shogun. In this age the height of perfection was reached in metal work, both chased and cast.

"The sword is the soul of the Samurai," says the old Japanese motto, therefore its decoration and adornment was a sacred service to which genius delighted to dedicate itself. In Japan the greatest artists were sometimes carvers and painters and workers in metals in one, and suggest comparison with the European masters of two centuries earlier. Did not Botticelli take his name from the goldsmith for whom he worked, and Leonardo da Vinci begin his art life by "twisting metal screens for

the tombs of the Medici"? Later we see him playing before his patron, Francesco, in Milan, upon that weird silver harp he had himself constructed, till at last, perfected in art, he projected upon canvas the Mona Lisa, that "realization of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions."

Genroku.

Also in Japan, as in Europe, the genius of the nation was consecrated to the dead. More than half of Michelangelo's life was devoted to the decoration of tombs, and the shrines of the Shoguns are the greatest art monuments in Japan. Preoccupation with graves perhaps enabled the Japanese to face death so readily, even embracing it upon the slightest pretext.

Genroku was the acme of the age of chivalry. Its tales of deadly duels and fierce vendettas are the delight of the nation. The history of the Forty-seven Ronin equals any mediæval tale of bloodthirsty vengeance and feudal devotion. This Japanese vendetta of the seventeenth century is still reënacted upon the stage, and remains the most popular drama of the day, and the actor-designers of Torii ever delighted in it as a subject for illustration. A brief outline of the story may be of interest and serve to recall its charming interpretation by Mitford.

The cause of this famous drama of vendetta was the avarice of Kotsuki-no-Suke, a courtier of the Shogun at Yedo who might have served as prototype for "Pooh Bah," in Gilbert's clever burlesque. This pompous official was detailed to receive at his castle and instruct in court etiquette two provincial noblemen, to whom had been assigned the onerous task of entertaining the Mikado's envoy from Kyoto. In return for this tutelage they duly sent many gifts to Kotsuki-no-Suke, but not costly

Genroku.

enough to gratify the rapacity of the Gilbertian minister, who day by day became more insufferably arrogant, not having been "sufficiently insulted."

Then a counsellor of one of these great lords, being wise in his generation, and fearing for his master's safety, rode at midnight to the castle of the greedy official, leaving a present or bribe of a thousand pieces of silver. This generous donation had the desired effect.

"You have come early to court, my lord," was the suave welcome the unconscious nobleman received the next morning. "I shall have the honour of calling your attention to several points of etiquette today." The next moment the countenance of Kotsuki-no-Suke clouded, and turning haughtily toward his other pupil from whom no largesse had been received, he cried, "Here, my lord of Takami, be so good as to tie for me the ribbon of my sock," adding under his breath, "boor of the provinces."

"Stop, my lord!" cried Takumi-no-Kami, and drawing his dirk, he flung it at the insolent nobleman's head. Then a great tumult arose. His court cap had saved from death Kotsuki-no-Suke, and he fled from the spot, whilst Takumi-no-Kami was arrested, and to divert the disgrace of being beheaded, hastily performed hara-kiri; his goods and castle were confiscated and his retainers became Ronin (literally "Wave Men"), cast adrift to follow their fortunes, roving at will.

The vendetta, sworn to and carried out by these forty-seven faithful servants, is the sequel of the story. Oishi Kuranosuki, the chief of the Ronin, planned the scheme of revenge. To put Kotsuki-no-Suke off his guard, the band dispersed, many of them under the disguise of workmen taking service in the *yashiki* of their enemy in order to become familiar with the interior of the fortification.

Meanwhile Kuranosuki, to further mislead his enemies, plunged into a life of wild dissipation, until Kotsuki-no-Suke, hearing of his excesses, relaxed his own vigilance, only keeping half the guard he had at first appointed. The wife and friends of Kuranosuki were greatly grieved at his loose conduct, for he took nobody into his confidence. Even a man from Satsuma, seeing him lying drunk in the open street, dared to kick his body, muttering, "Faithless beast, thou givest thyself up to women and wine, thou art unworthy of the name of a Samurai."

Genroku.

But Kuranosuki endured the contumely, biding his time, and at last, in the winter of the following year, when the ground was white with snow, the carefully planned assault was successfully attempted. The castle of Kotsuki-no-Suke was taken, but what was the consternation of the brave Ronin, when, after a prolonged search, they failed to discover their victim! In despair, they were about to despatch themselves, in accordance with their severe code of honour, when Kuranosuki, pushing aside a hanging picture, discovered a secret courtyard. There, hidden behind some sacks of charcoal, they found their enemy, and dragged him out, trembling with cold and terror, clad in his costly nightrobe of embroidered white satin. Then humbly kneeling, Oishi Kuranosuki thus addressed him: "My lord, we beseech you to perform Seppuku (happy despatch). I shall have the honour to act as your lordship's second, and when, with all humility, I shall have received your lordship's head, it is my intention to lay it as an offering upon the grave of our master, Asano-Takumi-no-Kami." Unfortunately, the carefully planned programme of the Ronin failed to recommend itself to Kotsuki-no-Suke, and he declined their polite invitation to disembowel himself, whereupon Kuranosuki at

one stroke cut off the craven head, with the blade used by his master in taking his own life.

Genroku.

So in solemn procession the Forty-seven Ronin, bearing their enemy's head, approached the Temple of Sengakuji, where they were met by the abbot of the monastery, who led them to their master's tomb. There, after washing in water, they laid it, thus accomplishing the vendetta; then praying for decent burial and for masses, they took their own lives.

Thus ended the tragic story, and visitors to the temple are still shown the receipt given by the retainers of the son of Kotsuki-no-Suke for the head of their lord's father, returned to them by the priest of Sengakuji. Surely it is one of the weirdest relics to take in one's hand, this memorandum, the simple wording of which but adds to its horror:

Item — One head.

Item — One paper parcel, and then the signatures of the two retainers beneath.

Another manuscript is also shown, in which the Ronin addressed their departed lord, laying it upon his tomb. It is translated thus by Mitford:

"The fifteenth year of Genroku, the twelfth month, and fifteenth day. We have come this day to do homage here, forty-seven men in all, from Oishi Kuranosuki, down to the foot soldier, Terasaka Kichiyemon, all cheerfully about to lay down our lives on your behalf. We reverently announce this to the honoured spirit of our dead master. On the fourteenth day of the third month of last year our honoured master was pleased to attack Kira-Kotsuki-no-Suke, for what reason we know not. Our honoured master put an end to his own life, but Kotsuki-no-Suke

lived. Although we fear that after the decree issued by the Government, this plot of ours will be displeasing to our master, still we who have eaten of your food could not without blushing repeat the verse, 'Thou shalt not live under the same heaven nor tread the same earth with the enemy of thy father or lord,' nor could we have dared to leave hell and present ourselves before you in paradise, unless we had carried out the vengeance which you began. Every day that we waited seemed as three autumns to us. Verily we have trodden the snow for one day, nay for two days, and have tasted food but once. The old and decrepit, the sick and ailing, have come forth gladly to lay down their lives. Having taken counsel together last night, we have escorted my lord, Kotsuki-no-Suke, hither to your tomb. This dirk by which our honoured lord set great store last year, and entrusted to our care, we now bring back. If your noble spirit be now present before this tomb, we pray you as a sign to take the dirk, and striking the head of your enemy with it a second time to dispel your hatred forever. This is the respectful statement of forty-seven men."

Genroku.

There were forty-seven Ronin. Why, then, do forty-eight tombstones stand beneath the cedars at Sengakuji? Truly the answer has caused tears to fall from the eyes of many a visiting pilgrim, for the forty-eighth tomb holds the body of the Satsuma man, who in an agony of grief and remorse ended his life, and was buried beside the hero, whose body he had scornfully trampled upon in the streets of sacred Kyoto.

This history of the Forty-seven Ronin is an epitome of Japanese ethics, for in it is exemplified their feudal devotion, their severe code of honour, their distorted vision of duty and fealty to a superior, justifying

Genroku.

the most lawless acts. Thus the conduct of Kuranosuki during his wild year of reckless abandonment, in which he threw off all moral restraint in order to deceive his enemy, breaking the heart of his faithful and devoted wife, was considered by his countrymen meritorious and a proof of his devotion. The Ukiyo-ye artists, who loved to take for models the beautiful denizens of the "Under World," chose this obsession of Kuranosuki as the subject for many of their illustrations, so that at a first glance the series might almost be mistaken for scenes from the life of the Yoshiwara.

Here and there, however, we come across the Ronin engaged in terrific conflict with Kotsuki-no-Suke's retainers. Cruel and bloodthirsty are the blades of their relentless kitanas, which once unsheathed must be slaked in human blood, and their garments, slashed into stiletto-like points of inky blackness, forming a *cheveaux de frise* round their fierce faces, seem scintillant with the spirit of vendetta.

In examining the sets of impressions, illustrating the popular story, it is hard to give preference to any special artist: to choose between the Utamaro-like violets and greens of Yeisen; the rich dark tints and fine backgrounds of Kunisada; the delicately massed detail of Toyokuni, unlike the usual boldness of his style, and the varied sword-play of the versatile Hiroshige, set in a frosted, snowy landscape. Hokusai, who abjured theatrical subjects after breaking away from the tutelage of Shunsho, published a series of prints illustrating the famous vendetta, but as his great-grandfather had been a retainer of Kotsuki-no-Suke, losing his life during the midnight attack, the story formed part of his ancestral history. The series is signed Kako, and the sweeping lines and contours of the female figures show the Kiyonaga influence. Yellow preponderates,

outlining the buildings and long interior vistas, and the impressions are framed with a singular convention of Hokusai at that period, drifting cloud effects in delicate pink. Utamaro also illustrated the story, substituting for the Ronin the forms of women, a favourite conceit of the artist of beauty.

Genroku.

This digression in favour of the masters of the Popular School has carried us over a hundred years, and we must return to the close of the seventeenth century. Moronobu illustrated the carnival of Genroku, but toward the end of the century, under the domination of a Shogun who combined the qualities of extravagance and profligacy with the delirious superstition of a Louis the Eleventh, a period of unbridled license set in. The military men, who were the nation's models, forgot their fine tradition and fell from their estate, so that the latter manners and customs of Genroku became a by-word. Then followed a puritanical reaction. Under the eighth Shogun, the knights were restricted from attending the theatre, just coming into favour, and the looser haunts of pleasure were strictly under ban. The Ukiyo-ye print, being the medium for illustrating these joys and pleasures, forbidden to the great, but still indulged in by the people, was strictly condemned, and to this day the aristocracy of Japan accord but grudging and unwilling recognition to the merits of the masters of Ukiyo-ye, the old caste prejudice still blinding their artistic sense.

At this stage Ukiyo-ye broke into rival schools, the founders of both belonging to the academy of Hishigawa Moronobu. The leader of the first, the school of painting, was Miyagawa Choshun, who in order to preserve aristocratic patronage and praise, eschewed the use of the printing-block, still taking his subjects from the "floating world," and so being

Genroku.

in one sense at unity with the other branch, that of printing founded by Kiyonobu, the first master of the great Torii School. As the Print artists are our subject matter we cannot follow the other branch of Ukiyo-ye, founded by Miyagawa Choshun, but leaving the atelier of the painters, we must devote ourselves to the fortunes of the Torii School, the laboratory of the Ukiyo-ye print, working parallel with the pictorial school for the first half of the eighteenth century.

The first sheets of Kiyonobu (about 1710), the founder of the Torii School, were printed in ink from a single block. Part of the edition would be issued in this uncoloured form, the rest being coloured by hand. The colours most used were olive and orange, these prints being called *Tan-ye*, whilst those in ink were named *Sumi-ye*. Later the *Beni* took place of the *Tan*, and formed a link between *Tan-ye* and *Urishi-ye* (lacquer paintings), the generic term for hand-coloured prints. The use of the multiple colour blocks gave rise to the title *Nishiki-ye*, or brocade paintings. The national mania for the stage induced Kiyonobu and his followers to take for their subjects popular actors, and the theatrical poster may be said to date from the decade following Genroku.

Later in the century the process of colour-printing by the substitution of blocks for flat colours was gradually evolved, and to no special artist or engraver can the credit be given, for all contributed to its development, though the genius of Suzuki Harunobu drew to a focus in 1765 the achievements of his brother artists, and it was he who solved the problem of uniting the skill of the engraver with the full palette of Miyagawa Choshun and his follower Shunsui, thus uniting the two branches of Ukiyo-ye art.

An Illustration from
"The Occupations of
Women."
By Suzuki Harunobu,
who, though a
worker in prints, styled
himself
"Yamato Yeshi,"
the title assigned to the
great court painters.

鈴木春信画

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The Popular School, however, is bound up with print development. Japanese book illustration and single-sheet printing revolutionized the world's art. The great connoisseurs of colour tell us that nowhere else is anything like it, so rich and so full, that a print comes to have every quality of a complete painting.

Genroku.

The other leaders of the Torii School were Torii Kiyomasu and Okumura Masanobu, namesake of the great founder of Kano, who must not be confounded with the later artist of the same name, belonging to the school of Kitao. Masanobu deserves special mention, for his style being chiefly pictorial, and his subjects not confined to the stage, he formed a link between the painter's atelier and his own. He realized that book prints rather than actor prints ought to be the most potent force of Ukiyo-ye.

Shigenaga followed in the footsteps of Masanobu, but his fame is eclipsed by that of his great pupil Harunobu, whose genius was displayed not only by the introduction of new colours upon the printing-block, but by his schemes of arrangement, juxtaposition of shades, and marvellous handling of the areas between the printed outlines. This restriction of measured spaces does not cramp the painter's individuality and sweep of brush; rather, they set him free to concentrate his genius upon blended harmonies, and interwoven schemes of colour, and to surrender himself to the intoxication of the palette.

Suzuki Harunobu revolutionized the status of the Popular School, pronouncing this dictum, "Though I am a worker in prints I shall hereafter style myself 'Yamato Yeshi,'" the title assumed by the ancient court painters. A national painter he declared himself, let him deny who dare,

Genroku.

working through the new medium of the despised and ostracized Ukiyo-ye print from which he determined to remove the stigma of vulgarity.

Now we see a strange transposition in the aims of the popular artists. Harunobu, though a pupil of Shigenaga, the printer, took for his models the subjects of the painter Shunsui, successor to Miyagawa Choshun, and by rejecting stage motives discarded the Torii tradition. From Shunsui, Harunobu borrowed the ineffable grace and refinement which breathe from the forms of his women, from the painter he stole colour harmonies and designs with landscape backgrounds, which the Torii School had hitherto ignored. The introduction of genre painting, though attributed by Walter Pater to Giorgione, applies equally to the work of Harunobu and his follower Koriusai. "He is the inventor of genre, of those easily movable pictures which serve neither for uses of devotion nor of allegorical or historical teaching: little groups of real men and women, amid congruous furniture or landscape, morsels of actual life, conversation or music or play, refined upon and idealized till they come to seem like glimpses of life from afar. People may move those spaces of cunningly blent colour readily and take them with them where they go, like a poem in manuscript, or a musical instrument, to be used at will as a means of self-education, stimulus or solace, coming like an animated presence into one's cabinet, and like persons live with us for a day or a lifetime." Must not such an influence have descended upon Whistler when, saturated with the atmosphere of Hiroshige, he imagined that most beautiful of his "Nocturnes" described by Theodore Child as "a vision in form and colour, in luminous air, a Japanese fancy realized on the banks of the gray Thames"?

The School of Torii.

The Printers' Branch of Ukiyo-ye.

THE Torii School was preëminently the exponent of the drama. It was bound up with stage development and ministered to the emotional temperament of the nation; leading in what may be considered a national obsession, a mania for actors and actor-prints.

A fascinating subject is this century of dramatic evolution fostered by the printers' branch of the Popular School. The actor had been consigned, in dark feudal days, to the lowest rung in the ladder of caste, ranking next to the outcast (*Eta*), as in early English days the strolling player was associated with tinkers and the other vagrant population.

The *No Kagura* and lyric drama,—suggesting the mediæval and passion plays of Europe,—prefigured the modern drama in Japan, but the immediate precursor of the present theatre was the Puppet Show, a Japanese apotheosis of our Marionette performances. It is interesting to note that Toyokuni, who M. Louis Gonse declared has carried further than any one the power of mimetic art, and with whose theatrical scenes we are most familiar, began his career as a maker of dolls, and these puppets were eagerly sought for as works of art.

If the aphorism "not to go to the theatre is like making one's toilet without a mirror," be true, then the Japanese are justified in their national stage passion, which overshadows the love of any other amusement. Taking the phrase literally, it was to the persons of the actors, and the printers who spread their pictures broadcast, that the people owed the æsthetic wonders of their costume. The designers were also artists,

The School of Torii.

as instanced by Hishigawa Moronobu, the Kyoto designer and Yedo embroiderer, the printer and painter, illustrator of books and originator of Ukiyo-ye.

Enthusiasm for the portraits of actors, fostered by the Torii printers from the foundation of the school by Kiyonobu, about 1710, hastened no doubt the development of colour-printing. As early as Genroku, the portrait of Danjuro, the second of the great dynasty of actors, who by their genius helped to brighten the fortunes of the play-house, was sold for five cash, in the streets of the capital.

The combined genius of the artists, engravers and printers of Ukiyo-ye evolved and perfected the use of the multiple colour-block. Toward the middle of the century, under the waning powers of Torii Kiyomitsu, successor to Kiyonobu, the school seemed sinking into oblivion, for Harunobu, its rightful exponent, filled with visions of ethereal refinement, scorned the theatrical arena. When most needed, however, a prophet arose in the person of Shunsho, the painter, the pupil of Shunsui and master of Hokusai, thus completing the transformation begun by Harunobu. The great scions of the rival branches of Ukiyo-ye, printing and painting, stepped into each other's places and bridged the chasm, which threatened the unity of the Popular School.

Both branches were united, however, in the use of the multiple colour-blocks, but although Shunsho followed Harunobu's experiments in colouring, varying his actor designs with domestic scenes and book illustrations, Harunobu resolutely refused to portray the life of the stage, and in this determination he was followed by his pupil and successor, Koriusai.

About the year 1765, the art of printing colours, by the use of individual blocks, technically called chromo-xylography, was perfected. It is

an interesting reflection, from the standpoint of Buddhism, — which teaches that in the fullness of time, the great masters in religion, art and learning become reincarnated upon earth, for the benefit of humanity, that at this period Hokusai was born, the crowning glory and master of Ukiyo-ye. Had he appeared earlier in the century, his genius might have been diverted to the technical development of printing, and the world thus been the loser of his creative flights.

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Professor Fenollosa beautifully defines the inception of the Ukiyo-ye print as "the meeting of two wonderfully sympathetic surfaces, — the un-sandpapered grain of the cherry-wood block, and a mesh in the paper, of little pulsating vegetable tentacles. Upon the one, colour can be laid almost dry, and to the other it may be transferred by a delicacy of personal touch that leaves only a trace of tint balancing lightly upon the tips of the fibres. And from the interstices of these printed tips, the whole luminous heart of the paper wells up from within, diluting the pigment with a soft golden sunshine. In the Japanese print we have flatness combined with vibration."

To the connoisseur, one of the most important considerations, scarcely secondary to that of colouring, in the selection of Ukiyo-ye gems, is this vibratory quality, depending equally upon the texture of the paper and the magnetic pressure of the master printer's fingers. This characteristic seems to have vanished from the modern print, and cannot be imitated, though the enthusiasm for fine specimens has flooded the market with spurious antiques, deceptive to the uninitiated. In the exquisite reproductions of the early Ukiyo-ye prints and paintings now being issued, — though a joy to the student unable to acquaint himself with the originals, —

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this ineffable effect of vibration is lost, probably owing to the substitution of a less sympathetic medium than the luminous vehicle of the early impressions.

The actual process of wood-cutting seems a simple art, but a close study of the making of prints will show the consummate skill required to produce them. The artist's design was transferred by tracing paper, then pasted on to the face of the wood block, and the white space hollowed out with a knife and small gouges. After the block had been inked, a sheet of damp paper was laid upon it, and the back of the paper was then rubbed with a flat rubber till the impression was uniformly transferred. Where more than one block was employed, as in colour-printing, the subsequent impressions were registered by marks made at the corners of the paper. The colouring matter laid upon these early blocks was extracted by mysterious processes from sources unknown to the Western world, which, alas! by supplying the Eastern market with cheap pigments, led to the deterioration of art in this essential particular.

From 1765 to 1780 the school of Ukiyo-ye was dominated by four great artists and creators of separate styles: Harunobu, succeeded by Koriusai, taking for motive the subjects of Shunsui; Shunsho of Katsukawa (changed by Shunsui from its former title of Miyagawa), upon whose shoulders had fallen the mantle of the Torii; Shigemasa, working upon Shunsho's lines, but breaking into a rival academy, the Kitao; Toyoharu, pupil of old Torii Toyonobu, founder of the school of Utagawa, whose most illustrious pupil was Toyokuni, the doll-maker, and brother of Toyohiro, Hiroshige's master. (Kunisada, noted for his backgrounds, succeeded Toyokuni, and after the death of his master signed himself Toyokuni the Second.)

An Actor
in the Miyako Dance.
By Shunko,
pupil of Shunsho,
nicknamed Ko-tsubo,
or "The Little Jar,"
from the seal
used by his master.

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A Flight of Storks.
By Okio,
Founder of the
Naturalistic School of
Painting at Kyoto.

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Shunsho is considered one of the greatest artists of Japan, both as an inventor and powerful colourist. M. Louis Gonse says: "All the collections of coloured prints which are today the delight of the tea-houses; all the fine compositions showing magnificent landscapes and sumptuous interiors; all those figures of actors with heroic gestures and impassive faces behind the grinning masks, and with costumes striking and superb,—came originally from the atelier of Katsukawa Shunsho, who had for a time the monopoly of them." While the Torii artists were beguiling the Yedo populace with theatrical portraiture, and aiding the growing tendency toward cosmopolitanism by issuing printed albums, books of travel and encyclopedias, art was also expanding at the ancient capital, Kyoto. Sukenobu, the prolific artist, was bringing out beautifully illustrated books, and Okio, from sketching on the earth with bamboo sticks, while following his father and mother to their work in the fields, had risen to be the great founder of the Maruyama school of painting, and the Shijo or naturalistic school was named from the street in which was the studio of the master.

The Popular School, aided by Okio, effected a revolution in the laws of painting at Kyoto, for the artists forsook their academic methods, painting birds, flowers, grass, quadrupeds, insects and fishes from nature. Okio's name ranks high among the great masters of Japanese art, of whom so many fanciful legends are told. The charming artist with brush and pen, John La Farge, says: "As the fruit painted by the Greek deceived the birds, and the curtain painted by the Greek painter deceived his fellow-artist, so the horses of Kanaoka have escaped from their kakemonos, and the tigers sculptured in the lattices of temples have been

known to descend at night and rend one another in the courtyards."

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Then the story is told of a moonlight picture, which, when unrolled, filled a dark room with light. A pretty legend of Tanyu, the great Kano artist, and the crabs at Enryaku Temple, is given by Adachi Kinnotsuke. Upon one panel of the *fusuma*, or paper screen, is seen a crab, marvellously realistic, only with claws invisible. On the other panels the artist had painted its companions, and at the bidding of his patron furnished them with claws. "Nevertheless," the master declared, "I warn you that if I give these crabs claws they will surely crawl out of the picture." As the visitor glances from the wonderful counterfeit crab to the four empty panels beside it, he knows the old master had only spoken the truth.

And so with Okio. He breathed into his pictures the breath of life. His animals live, and his flights of storks swoop across the great kakemonos, each bird with an individuality of its own, though one of a multitude of flying companions. To view Okio aright, we should see him at home in his own environment, not in Europe, where so many copies of his masterpieces abound. John La Farge gives us a glimpse of an Okio, fitly set, framed in oriental magnificence, in the Temple of Iyemitsu at Nikko: "All within was quiet, in a golden splendour. Through the small openings of the black and gold gratings a faint light from below left all the golden interior in a summer shade, within which glittered on golden tables the golden utensils of the Buddhist ceremonial. The narrow passage makes the center, through whose returning walls project, in a curious refinement of invention, the golden eaves of the inner building beyond. Gratings, which were carved, and gilded trellises

Airing the Wardrobe in Sultry Weather. By Kiyonaga, the regenerator of Torii, whose classic figures recall, in their dignity and simplicity, the methods of the early Italian masters.

清長画

Property of
Zumbrota Library

of exquisite design, gave a cool, uncertain light. An exquisite feeling of gentle solemnity filled the place. In the corridor facing the mountain and the tomb, a picture hangs on the wall. It is by Okio. Kuwannon, the Compassionate, sits in contemplation beside the descending stream of life."

The School of Torii.

About 1775 arose a legitimate successor to the school of Torii in the adopted son of Kiyomitsu, Kiyonaga. He discarded the theatrical tradition of his school, but the boldness of his drawing was foreign to the style of Harunobu. "His brush had a superhuman power and swing." He rivalled the three great masters, Koriusai, Shigemasa, founder of Kitao, and Toyoharu of Utagawa, and the masters of Ukiyo-ye, forsaking their individual predilections, flocked to his studio.

The simplicity and dignity of the early Italian masters, sought after and adored by the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, their noble lines and contours, are again realized in the panels of Kiyonaga. Professor Fenollosa said that "classic" is the instinctive term to apply to Kiyonaga, and that his figures at their best may be placed side by side with Greek vase painting. Ideally beautiful is the fall of his drapery, determining the lines of the figure in the fewest possible folds. In indoor scenes he almost rivalled Harunobu, but he loved best to paint in the open air. In imagination we see Kiyonaga, the lover of beauty, gazing at the wealth of lotus blooms which fill the moats of feudal Yedo, and in the crucible of his fancy transmuting them into the forms of women. The lotus, of all flowers, has the deepest art significance, and is the oldest motive. The author of "Greek Lines," Henry Van Brunt, said: "The lotus perpetually occurs in oriental mythology as the sublime and hallowed symbol of the productive power of nature. The Hindu and the Egyptian

instinctively elevated it to the highest and most cherished place in their Pantheons."

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It is the flower of religion, of beauty, and of love. From the ocean the Hindu Aphrodite, Lachsmi, ascended. Isis in Egypt reigned, crowned by the lotus, and there the tender, flowing lines became sublime, monumental, fitted to symbolize death and eternal repose. In Japan its joyous curves represent life, immortality, and, delicately sensuous, they conjure up visions of ideal beauty. The lotus, sweetly blooming before the artist's eye, expanded into a vision of fair women, whose lissom forms he clothed with swirls of drapery. And the women of Japan, enamoured of these enchanting poses, endeavoured to assume the curves of Kiyonaga, sheathing their delicate limbs in silken draperies, and simulating in their enchanting slenderness the stems of flowers—or, to borrow a beautiful simile from Lafcadio Hearn, "looking like a beautiful silver moth robed in the folding of its own wings."

It is said that every Japanese actor-print was a potential poster, and, alas! the fashion-plate is endeavouring to mold itself upon the most exaggerated type of the degenerate offspring of the genius of the Torii School.

The Japanese woman, with her untrammelled form arrayed in draperies designed by consummate artists, may dare to follow classic Kiyonaga—youth and grace may acquire oriental plasticity. But let fashion rest there. Pitiful and ludicrously futile is the effort of embonpoint to attain sinuosity. Lines of beauty cannot be manufactured; as well imagine the slender stem of the lotus encircled in steel, its curves determined by a multiplicity of wires and tapes.

Two Ladies.
By Yeishi, who gave
to his faces
a mystic, even religious
expression,
like the women of the
Middle Ages.

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The School of Torii.

Although the leaders of Ukiyo-ye followed so closely in the footsteps of Kiyonaga that his type of face stamps the years from 1880 to 1890, yet his style was too classic, too noble to suit the taste of the Yedo populace, which, in its thirst for realism, had become depraved. Rather than lower his standard he chose to resign, leaving the field to his followers, Yeishi, Utamaro and Toyokuni. These masters, at first as dignified in their method as Kiyonaga, now yielded to the public craze for the exaggerated, the abnormal and grotesque. It was an apotheosis of ugliness and vulgarity, a "Zolaism in prints."

Coarse pictures of actors, masquerading in female dress, replaced the charming little domestic women of Harunobu and Koriusai,— the ladies of Japan, as we see them in reality,— and the noble figures of Kiyonaga. Gigantic courtesans, bizarre and fantastic, with delirious headgear, took the place of Shunsho's fair children of the "Underworld," who, in the modesty of their mien, seemed to belie the calling they so often deplored, as the songs of the Yoshiwara testify, plaintively sung to the syncopated rhythm of the samisen, tinkling through the summer nights.

The school of Ukiyo-ye was sinking into obscurity, when Hiroshige and Hokusai appeared, two children of light, dispersing the gloom: Hiroshige, the versatile painter, lover of landscape and ethereal artist of snow and mist; Hokusai, the prophet, and regenerator of Ukiyo-ye. He was the artisan-artist, in the land which recognizes no inferior arts, and the Mang-wa, consisting of studies as spontaneously thrown off as those in the sketch-book Giorgione carried in his girdle, was published for the use of workmen. Living in simplicity and poverty he gave his

The School of Torii.

life to the people, and the impression of his genius is stamped upon their work. A true handicraftsman was Hokusai,—the Mang-wa a dictionary of the arts and crafts, as well as the inspired vehicle of art. In it "balance, rhythm and harmony, the modes in which Beauty is revealed, both in nature and art," were manifested,—for he was a vital artist, laying bare the enigma of evolution, and the mystery of creation.

While Mother Sleeps.
By Utamaro,
named by
M. de Goncourt:
"Le Fondateur de
L'Ecole de la Vie."

哥麿筆

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Utamaro.

Le Fondateur de L'École de la Vie.

THE above title is quoted from the work of M. Edmond de Goncourt, "as one having authority," there being many claimants to the leadership of Ukiyo-ye (the floating world), the Popular School of Japanese Art. In the life of Utamaro, M. de Goncourt, in exquisite language and with analytical skill, has interpreted for us the meaning of that form of Japanese art which found its chief expression in the use of the wooden block for colour-printing, and to glance appreciatively at the work of both artist and author is the motive of this sketch.

The Ukiyo-ye print, despised by the haughty Japanese aristocracy, became the vehicle of art for the common people of Japan, and the names of the artists who aided in its development are familiarly quoted in every studio, whilst the classic painters of "Tosa" and "Kano" are comparatively rarely mentioned. The consensus of opinion in Japan during the lifetime of Utamaro agrees with the verdict of M. de Goncourt. No artist was more popular. His atelier was besieged by editors giving orders, and in the country his works were eagerly sought after, when those of his famous contemporary, Toyokuni, were but little known. In the "Barque of Utamaro," a famous surimono, the title of which forms a pretty play upon words, *maro* being the Japanese for vessel, the seal of supremacy is set upon the artist. Here he is represented as holding court in a gaily decorated barge, surrounded by a bevy of beauty paying homage to his genius. He was essentially the painter of women, and though M. de Goncourt sets forth his astonishing versatility, he yet

entitles his work, "Outamaro, le Peintre des Maisons Vertes."

Utamaro.

The beautiful inhabitants of these celebrated houses of the Yoshiwara (the flower quarter) of Yedo had ever been sought as models by the artists of Ukiyo-ye. But, alas! the sensuous poetic-artistic temperament of Utamaro, undisciplined and uncontrolled, led to his undoing. The pleasure-loving artist, recognizing no creed but the worship of beauty, refusing to be bound by any fetters but those of fancy, fell at last into the lowest depths of degradation, physical and moral. And this debasement of their leader, tainting his art, was reflected in the work of his brother artists and hastened the decadence of the Popular School.

To understand the influences which sapped the self-control of the gay and beauty-loving Utamaro, we have only to glance at the text by Jipensha Ikkou of "The Annuary of the Green Houses," two volumes of prints in colour, so marvellously beautiful that they caused the artist to be recognized as, in a sense, the official painter of the Yoshiwara. The writer thus sums up the fatal fascination of the inmates, the courtesans of highest rank, who alone were depicted by Utamaro. "The daughters of the Yoshiwara are brought up like princesses. From infancy they are given the most finished education" (from the Japanese standpoint, be it observed). "They are taught reading, writing, art, music, le thé, le parfum" (in the game of scents, the art is to guess by inhaling the odour of burning perfumes the secret of their composition). "Their entourage is that of princesses, brought up in the seclusion of the palace. Coming from all parts of the 'Land of the Rising Sun,' they must discard their individual patois and learn to speak the archaic tongue, slightly modified,

the poetical, the noble language of the court from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century."

Utamaro.

In the home of the celebrated Tsutaya Juzabro, who edited the most beautiful books of the time, in his early impressionable youth lived Utamaro, within a stone's throw of the great gate leading to the Yoshiwara. By day he devoted himself to his art, by night he surrendered himself to the fatal enchantment of that brilliant "Underworld," until, like Merlin, ensnared by Vivian, with the charm of "woven paces and waving hands," his art sapped by excesses, he became "lost to life, and use, and name, and fame."

Let us, forgetting this sad sequel, glance at the works which testify to the life of high artistic endeavour led by Utamaro in the early part of his career. In the preface to the "Yehon Moushi Yerabi" (Chosen Insects), the master of Utamaro, Toriyama Sekiyen, throws so charming a sidelight upon the youth of the artist, that the temptation to quote is irresistible. The value of these Japanese prefaces to the world, to workers in every field, is incalculable. At the outset of his work, M. de Goncourt alludes to the well-known preface of Hokusai in the "Fugaku Hiak'kei," and doubtless fortified himself by the stimulating example of the old master, when undertaking at the age of seventy the great task of presenting to the Western world, under the title of "L'Art Japonais," a history of five noted painters, besides that of other artists in bronze and lacquer, pottery and iron — artists in a land where the terms artist and artisan are interchangeable, the only country where art industrial almost always touches grand art.

The translator of the preface of Sekiyen is gratefully referred to by M. de Goncourt as "l'intelligent, le savant, l'aimable M. Hyashi." It

Utamaro.

may be considered a revolutionary manifesto of the Profane School, the school of real life, in opposition to the hierarchical Buddhist academies of Kano and Tosa, which had become stultified by tradition and stifled by conventional observances.

"Preface écrite par Toriyama Sekiyen, le maître d' Outamaro, célébrant le naturisme (sortit du cœur) de son petit, de son cher élève Outa." "Reproduire la vie par le cœur, et en dessiner la structure au pinceau, est la loi de la peinture. L'étude que vient de publier maintenant, mon élève Outamaro, reproduit la vie même du monde des insectes. C'est la vraie peinture du cœur. Et quand je me souviens d'autrefois, je me rappelle que des l'enfance, le petit Outa, observait le plus infinie détail des choses. Ainsi a l'automne, quand il était dans le jardin, il se mettait en chasse des insectes, et que ce soit un criquet ou une sauterelle, avait-il fait une prise, il gardait le bestiole dans sa main et s'amusait a l'étudier. Et combien de fois je l'ai grondé, pans l'apprehension qu'il ne prenne l'habitude, de donner la mort a des êtres vivants. Maintenant qu'il a acquis son grand talent du pinceau, il fait de ces études d'insectes, la gloire de sa profession."

The enthusiastic master of *le petit Outa* proceeds to rhapsodize upon his pupil's genius and intimate knowledge of the structure of insects. "He makes us hear," he says, "the shrilling of the tamanoushi," the cicada of Japan, whose endless peevish twanging upon one string forms an underlying accompaniment to the harmonies of long summer days. "He borrows the light weapons of the grasshopper for making war; he exhibits the dexterity of the earthworm, boring the soil under the foundations of old buildings; he penetrates the mysteries of nature in the

groping of the larvæ, in the lighting of his path by the glow-worm, and he ends by disentangling the end of the thread of the spider's web."

Utamaro.

The colour-printing of these insects is a miracle of art, says M. de Goncourt, and there is nothing comparable to it in Europe. Of the methods by which these colour prints are brought to such a height of perfection, it is almost impossible to speak authoritatively. They are the result of a threefold combination: of a paper marvellously prepared from the bark of the shrub, *Kozo*, diluted with the milk of rice flour and a gummy decoction extracted from the roots of the hydrangea and hibiscus; of dyes, into the secret of whose alchemy no modern artist can penetrate, it being safe to say the early "Tan-ye" and "Beni-ye" prints can never be reproduced; of the application of those colours by the master engraver's finger — that wizard hand of the Orient into whose finger-tips are distilled the mysteries of bygone centuries. A portion of the colour by means of this calculated pressure is drunk, absorbed into the paper, and only the transparency is left vibrating upon the fibres, like colour beneath the glaze.

The "Catalogue Raisonné" of M. de Goncourt is a prose masterpiece. His descriptive touches, like pastels set in jewels, captivate the imagination. Through him we see the albums, the fans, the kakemonos, the surimonos. Oh, the prints, with their wondrous backgrounds, the delight of Utamaro! Sometimes straw-yellow, the uniformity broken with clouds of ground mica; sometimes gray in tint, like the traces of receding waves upon the beach. Some silvered backgrounds throw moonlight reflections upon the figures; some are sombre, bizarre — all are marvellous beyond words. And the colours! we cannot define them in

Utamaro.

English. The "bleus" (malades des mauves), the "rose" (beni) "si peu de rose, qu'ils semblent s'apercevoir a travers un tulle; l'azur — delavé, et comme noyé dans l'eau," — not colours, but nuances, which recall the colours. And the "Gauffrage," so effective with the print artists, with us a mere confectioner's touch!

It is said that "the æsthetic temperament of a nation is most subtly felt in the use of colour. Purity, coldness, sensuality, brightness, dullness of tints, are significant terms correlated to mental and physical human phenomena." The assertion of Ruskin, that "the bodily system is in a healthy state when we can see hues clearly in their most delicate tints, and enjoy them, fully and simply, with the kind of enjoyment children have in eating sweet things," is brought to mind in viewing the Japanese people, upon the occasion of one of their great flower fêtes, feasting their eyes upon cherry blooms or trailing clusters of the wisteria.

Utamaro planned schemes of colour and devised harmonies — themes which, improvised upon and endlessly imitated by his artist confrères, filled his own countrymen with delight and ravished the hearts of Parisian painters. The influence of Utamaro, Hiroshige and the other masters of Ukiyo-ye revolutionized the colour-sense of the art world, so that Theodore Child, writing in 1892, remarks of the Japanese influence: "The Paris Salon of today as compared with the salon of ten years ago is like a May morning compared with a dark November day."

The same keen observation and technical skill which would have made Utamaro a famous naturalist is shown in his marvellous studies of women. He was the first Japanese artist who deviated from the traditional manner of treating the face. The academic style demanded the

nose to be suggested by one calligraphic, aquiline stroke, the eyes to be mere slits, the mouth the curled up petal of a flower. Utamaro blent with this convention, so little human, a mutinous grace, a spiritual comprehension; he kept the consecrated lines, but made them approach the human. These "effigies of women" became individuals; in one word, he is an idealist, he "makes a goddess out of a courtesan." No detail of her anatomy escapes his eye, no grace of line or beauty of contour. M. de Goncourt, in detailing the great prints of Utamaro, transports us to the Orient. He unrolls the film of memory, so that again the Japanese woman stands, reclines, and lives before us.

Utamaro.

"Vous avez la Japonaise en tous les mouvements intimes de son corps; vous l'avez, dans ses appuiements de tête, sur le dos de sa main, quand elle réfléchit, dans ses agenouillements, les paumes de ses mains appuyés sur les cuisses, quand elle écoute, dans sa parole, jetée de côté, la tête un peu tournée, et qui la montre dans les aspects si joliment fuyants d'un profil perdu; vous l'avez dans sa contemplation amoureuse des fleurs qu'elle regarde aplatie a terre; vous l'avez dans ses renversements ou legèrement elle pose, a demi assise, sur la balustrade d'un balcon; vous l'avez dans ses lectures, ou elle lit dans le volume, tout près de ses yeux, les deux coudes appuyés sur ses genoux; vous l'avez dans sa toilette qu'elle fait avec une main tenant devant elle, son petit miroir de metal, tandis que de l'autre main passée derrière elle, elle se caresse distraitement la nuque de son écran; vous l'avez dans le contournement de sa main autour d'une coupe de saké, dans l'attouchement delicat et recroquevill´ de ses doigts de singe, autour des laques, des porcelaines, des petits objets artistiques de son pays; vous l'avez enfin la femme de

l'Empire-du-Lever-du-Soleil, en sa grace languide, et son coquet rampement sur les nattes du parquet."

Utamaro.

To translate is to travesty, for the French language seems to be the only medium through which can be filtered the nuances of Japanese thought, which elude the ordinary elements of language, like the perfume of flowers, the bouquet of delicate vintages. Our blunt Anglo-Saxon mars that picture language, where one flexible, curved calligraphic stroke conveys to the æsthetically receptive oriental imagination what stanzas of rhyming rhapsody fail to define. Sir Edwin Arnold and Lafcadio Hearn approach the French, are, so to speak, orientalized. Ordinary English fails to give a Japanese equivalent. It is too emphatic, too objective; it suggests the dominant British hobnail upon the delicate Tea-house tatami — that immaculate, beautiful matting, into whose uniform lines embroidered draperies dissolve deliciously. Oh, those dreams of dresses! — the warp and woof of the visions of the masters of Ukiyo-ye, of Harunobu and Kiyonaga, Toyokuni and Kunisada, and all the rest, the idols of Parisian colourists!

"For us," says M. de Goncourt, "Utamaro painted violet dresses, where, upon the border, *degradation rosée*" (fading into Beni, that mystic tint, the spirit of ashes of rose), "birds are swooping,— violet dresses, across which woven in light, zigzag insect characters, composing the Japanese alphabet,— violet dresses, where Corean lions, grim and ferocious, crouch, gleaming in shading of old bronze within the purple folds! Dresses of mauve, smoky, shading into bistre, where the purple iris unsheathes its head from the slender gray-green stalk!" Mourasaki-ya (maison mauve) was the name of the atelier of Utamaro. "Robes of that milky blue the Chinese call 'blue of the sky after the rain,' beneath

clusters of pale rose peonies; dresses of silvery gray, fretted with sprays of flowering shrubs, making a misty moonshine; pea-green dresses, enamelled with rosy cherry blooms; green dresses, fading into watery tints, hidden by groups of the pawlonia, the coat of arms of the reigning family; purple costumes, channelled with water courses, where mandarin ducks pursue each other around the hem. Oh, the beautiful black backgrounds, controlling the scintillating mass of colour! Black robes sown with chrysanthemums, or showered with pine-needles, worked in white. Black dresses, where finely woven baskets are mingled with sceptres of office! 'Oh! les belles robes!' he cries, where flights of cranes dissolve into the distance, where birds are fluttering, where lacy fretwork of fans and little garlands are interwoven!—a motive delighted in by Utamaro as a framework for beloved faces." All that is beautiful in nature and art lived and breathed in these dresses, upon which the loving hand of the painter left a grace in every fold.

Utamaro.

The early inspirer of Utamaro's genius was Kiyonaga, who had restored the glory of the school of Torii—the printer's branch of Ukiyo-ye, which had sunk into temporary oblivion under the waning powers of Kiyomitsu. The atelier of Kiyonaga became the sanctuary of the artists of Ukiyo-ye, who, upon entering, forsook their individual traditions. There worshipped Toyokuni of Utagawa; Yeishi, the scion of classic and aristocratic Kano; and at the master's feet sat the Young Utamaro, absorbing his methods until, in his early compositions, said M. de Goncourt, the technique and mannerisms of Kiyonaga "saute aux yeux."

The influence of Kiyonaga pervades his most beautiful work; but later, under a life of constant self-indulgence, amongst associations all

Utamaro.

tending to demoralization, his genius suffered an eclipse. His loss of self-control affected his art, until the sweeping lines and noble contours which his brush had acquired in the atelier of Kiyonaga were lost or widely travestied into a "delirium of female tallness." In these wild flights his brother artists followed in headlong pursuit, and the contagion of the movement swept the studios of Paris. In the modern poster we see the degenerate offspring of the genius of Utamaro, and of Toyokuni. Professor Fenollosa said, "The generation of Aubrey Beardsley prefer these tricks to the sober grace of Harunobu, Kiyonaga and Koriusai." It is art born of excess, a "Zolaism in prints."

The horrors of diseased imagination, the visions begotten of absinthe, which blot the brilliant pages of De Maupassant and the verse of Paul Verlaine, were reflected by Utamaro in his studies of the loathsome and the abnormal, where Montaigne declares, "L'esprit faisant le cheval echappé, enfants des chimères." The blasphemous impieties of this culte, deplored by all true Frenchmen, in the country of Hugo and Molière, were distanced by Utamaro, who suborned his art, his cynical brush caricaturing under the distorted figures of noted courtesans the saints and sages of the sacred Buddhist legends. Trading upon his vast popularity, he issued a pictorial satire upon one of the famous Shoguns, but this act of lèse-majestie brought him into disfavour with the reigning Shogun, the Louis XV of Japan, an artistic voluptuary, like his prototype, the subject of Utamaro's cartoon, and the artist was condemned and cast into prison. From his cell the gay butterfly of the Yoshiwara emerged, spent and enfeebled, daring no more flights of fancy, and dying in 1806, before he reached his fiftieth year, from the effects of his confinement and the misuse of pleasure.

Utamaro.

Oh, the pity of it! the profound pathos in the picture, in Sekiyen's preface of the little "Outa" holding his treasured prize, "le petit bestiole,"—the childish artist-hands of the embryo master clasping the insect so gently to preserve its ephemeral life, yet later plunging into the dissipation and excesses which shortened his own. Living with the déclassé, however we may gloss their imperfections and cover with the cloak of charity their sorrowful calling, he became himself a cynic, an outcast, an iconoclast, learning that "hardening of the heart which brings

"Irreverence for the dreams of youth."

Though Utamaro was one of the greatest of the popular artists, his demoralization led to the decadence of his school, which later was regenerated by the great master of Ukiyo-ye, Hokusai, the artist of the people. In Hokusai, "Dreaming the things of Heaven and of Buddha," breathed the pure spirit of art,—that Spirit of poetry and purity which calls to us in Milton's immortal lines:

"Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free.
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her."

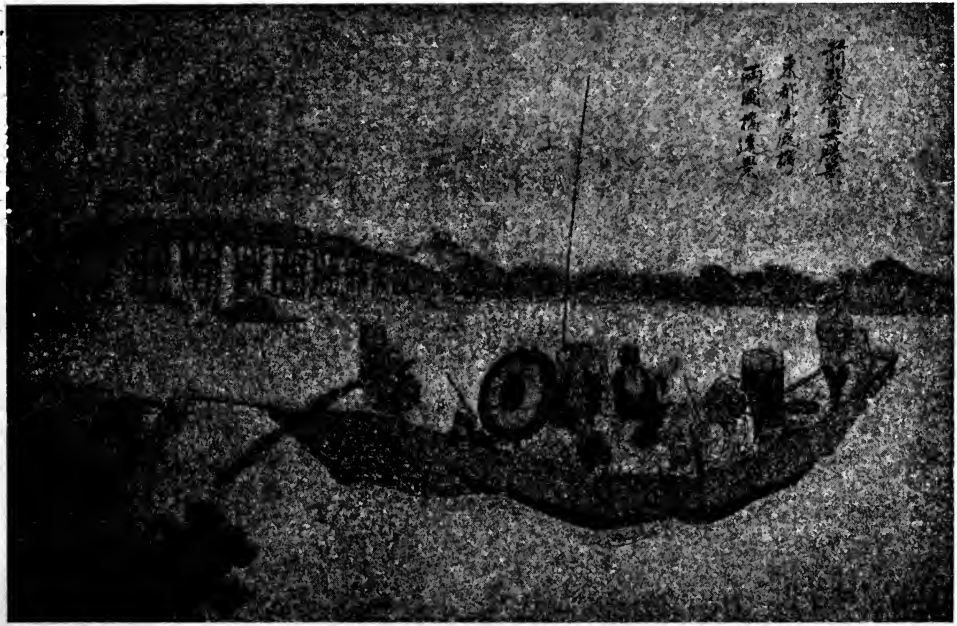
"The Romance of Hokusai."

Master of Ukiyo-ye.

"*From the age of six, I had a mania for drawing the forms of things. By the time I was fifty, I had published an infinity of designs, but all I have produced before the age of seventy is not worth taking into account. At seventy-five I have learned a little about the real structure of nature,— of animals, plants and trees, birds, fishes and insects. In consequence, when I am eighty, I shall have made still more progress. At ninety I shall penetrate the mystery of things; at a hundred I shall certainly have reached a marvellous stage, and when I am a hundred and ten, everything I do—be it but a line or dot— will be alive. I beg those who live as long as I, to see if I do not keep my word. Written at the age of seventy-five by me,— once Hokusai,— today Gwakio-rojin, 'the old man, mad about drawing.'*"

"ARS *longa, vita brevis,*" though a time-worn aphorism, seems the best comment upon these words of Hokusai, which preface the "Fugaku Hiak'kei" (Hundred Views of Fuji). Judging from what he had accomplished, before his death in 1849, at the age of eighty-nine, and the continual increase in his powers, it is easy to believe that had his life been extended to the limit he craved, the prophecy would have been fulfilled.

M. Louis Gonse says of Hokusai, "He is the last and most brilliant figure of a progress of more than ten centuries — the exuberant and exquisite product of a time of profound peace and incomparable refinement."



A Ferry-boat crossing the Sumida River. By Hokusai. Mount Fuji towers in the background, and in the middle distance the graceful Bridge Ryogoku Bashi spans the river.

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"The Romance of Hokusai."

From the standpoint of Buddhism, Hokusai was the crowning glory, the supreme efflorescence of countless previous incarnations. In his career he epitomized the theory of evolution, the embryonic stages being exemplified by his progress through the schools. Trained in the atelier of Shunsho, the most skillful exponent of Ukiyo-ye art, he rapidly absorbed the methods of his master; but even the Popular School was trammelled by convention, and Hokusai's genius, rejecting academic fetters, winged its flight through all the realms of oriental art.

He drank at the fountain-head of China, then absorbed the traditions of the "two great streams of Kano and Tosa, which flowed without mixing to the middle of the eighteenth century." Kano, springing from Chinese models, was transformed by the genius of Masanobu and his followers, and became the most illustrious school of painting in Japan. It was the official school of the Shoguns, in opposition to "Tosa"—that elegant and exquisite appanage of the Mikados, which represented aristocratic taste.

The Tosa school is characterized by extreme delicacy of execution and fine use of the brush, as in Persian miniature painting. The splendour of the screens of Tosa has never been surpassed, with their precious harmonies in colour and delicate designs (so often imitated in lacquer), against glorious backgrounds in rich gold-leaf.

He studied the technique of Okio, founder of the school of realism, which, maturing at Kyoto, led up to "Ukiyo-ye," the popular art of the masses of Yedo. Ukiyo-ye, literally "The Floating World," despised by the ascetic disciples of Buddha and Confucius for picturing the gay world of fashion and folly, was the name of the school which liberated Japanese art from the shackles of centuries of tradition.

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Ukiyo-ye is the supreme expression, the concentrated essence of the schools, a river of art whose fount was India, Persia and China. For centuries it was forced into narrow channels by the haughty and exclusive aristocracy; but ever widening, its branches at last united and swept into their joyous current the common people of Japan, who, intuitively art lovers, had ever thirsted for the living stream. Now they beheld themselves reflected, in all the naturalness of daily life, yet with a spiritual rendering, "appealing," said Jarves, "to those intuitions with which the soul is freighted when it first comes to earth, whose force is ever manifested by a longing for an ideal not of the earth, and whose presence can only be explained as an augury of a superior life to be, or else the dim reminiscence of one gone; and the recognition of this ideal is the touchstone of art—art which then becomes the solution of immortality."

The originators of Ukiyo-ye, which included in its scope painting proper, book illustration and single-sheet pictorial prints, were Iwasa Matahei and Moronobu, followed in long succession by Shunsui, the precursor of Hokusai's master, Shunsho; and united with it were the engravers of the Torii school, culminating in Kiyonaga (with whose grace and beauty of line Hokusai could never compete), the refined offshoot of the Kitao, and the elegant scion of Kano—Yeishi.

Hokusai's individuality and independence long galled his master, and a final rupture was caused by the pupil's enthusiasm for the bold and sweeping, black-and-white, calligraphic strokes of Kano. Then began a hard struggle for the youthful artist, who had no money and no influence. His father was a maker of metal mirrors, Hokusai's real name being Nakajima Tetsu Jiro, but his pseudonyms were legion. In the

atelier of Shunsho, he was called Shunro,—taking with the other disciples of this school of Katsukawa, the first syllable of his master's name.

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Cast adrift upon the streets of Yedo, he sold red pepper, and hawked almanacs, at the same time constantly studying, and seizing the best ideas from all the schools. Blent with an intuitive instinct for art, the Japanese nature is essentially histrionic, and throughout the whole career of Hokusai there is an element which is genuinely dramatic. C. J. Holmes, in his beautiful work on Hokusai, gives many romantic incidents in the artist's life, and was it not by a theatrical *tour de force* that he first won popular favour?

He chose no doubt a national holiday, perhaps the festival of "Cherry Viewing," when Uyeno Park is thronged with sightseers of every station in life. Here in the heart of the great city of Tokyo is a hallowed spot — majestic, grand and peaceful, where in mystic solemnity the sacred cedars enshrine that wondrous necropolis of illustrious dead,—for at Uyeno lie buried six of the famous Shoguns.

In the courtyard of one of the temples, Hokusai erected a rough scaffolding, upon which was spread a sheet of paper, eighteen yards long and eleven in width. Here in the sacred heart of Japan, with tubs of water and tubs of ink, the master and predestined genius of his country manifested his power. He swept his huge brush this way and that, the crowd constantly increasing in density, many scaling the temple roof to see the marvellous feat,—a colossal figure, springing into life at the touch of the creator. All who know his work can in imagination picture the grand sweeping curves and graduated shadings that the magic broom evolved; and the artistic people gazed spell-bound, while many a

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murmured "Naruhodo!" (Wonderful) and sibilant inhalation of the breath marked their recognition of the master's power.

Displaying less of the artist than the genius at legerdemain were Hokusai's street tricks — almost reprehensible did we not know the dire straits to which genius is often reduced. An eager expectant crowd dogged his footsteps and watched with delighted curiosity, while he sketched landscapes, upside down, with an egg or a bottle, or a wine measure, anything that came to his hand,— changing with bewildering effect from huge figures of Chinese heroes and demigods to microscopic drawings on grains of rice, and pictures made out of chance blots of ink.

His fame was noised abroad, and at last reached the ears of the Shogun, and now an unprecedented honour was conferred upon the humble apostle of the artisan, for he was summoned before the august presence to give an exhibition of his skill. The Japanese are ever imitative, and Hokusai may have borne in mind the legend of his prototype Sesshiu, an artist-priest of the fifteenth century, who sketched before the Emperor of China a marvellous dragon, with splashes from a broom plunged in ink.

Still more spectacular and theatrical was Hokusai's debut, for, spreading a sheet of paper before the feet of the monarch, he covered it with a blue wash,— then seizing a live cock, he daubed its feet with a red pigment, and let it run over the wet colour, when the Shogun and his astonished courtiers beheld a flowing stream of liquid blue, upon which appeared to float filmy segregated petals of red maple leaves. A mere trick! — unworthy of genius, we might say, but Hokusai had gauged his

countrymen, and knew that his *jeu d'esprit* would arouse and impress these aristocratic connoisseurs, jaded with ceremonial observances, more than any display of technical knowledge,—for the Japanese, as a nation, are naively childish in their love of novelty and amusement, and of the unusual and bizarre.

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Is it not possible that this trickery of the master may have unconsciously supplied the motive for Hiroshige's famous print of a Yedo suburb, chosen by Professor Fenollosa, in his beautiful work on Ukiyo-ye,—where he so poetically says, "the orange fire of maples deepens the blue of marshy pools"?

Space does not permit any detailed description of the compositions of Hokusai, and there is no complete catalogue of his works, the one nearest to accuracy being M. Edmond de Goncourt's *Catalogue raisonné*. His fecundity was marvellous. He illustrated books of all kinds, poetry, comic albums, accounts of travels,—in fact his works are an encyclopedia of Japanese life. His paintings are scattered, and countless numbers lost, many being merely ephemeral drawings, thrown off for the passing pleasure of the populace. The original designs for the prints were transferred to the blocks, and lost, though the master rigidly superintended the reproduction of his works, and his wood-cutters were trained to follow the graceful sweeping curves with perfect accuracy, many of his compositions being ruled across for exact reduction.

Ukiyo-ye art is bound up with print development, and the climax of xylography had been reached in the time of Hokusai. Japanese book illustration, and single-sheet printing, revolutionized the world's art. The great connoisseurs of colour tell us that nowhere else is there anything

like it,—so rich and so full, that a print comes to have every quality of a complete painting.

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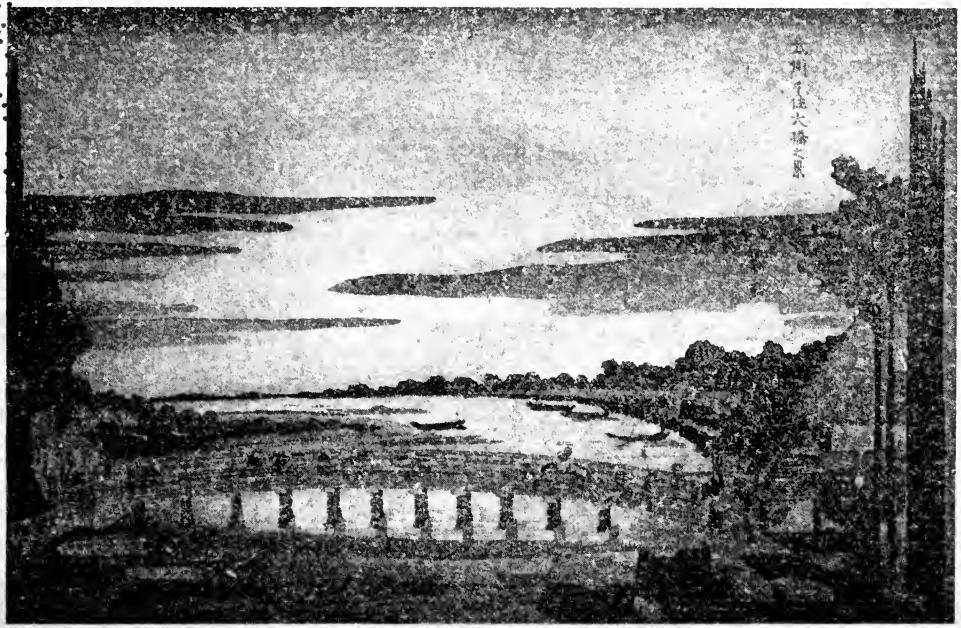
Hokusai had served a four years' apprenticeship to the school of engraving, and his practiced eye was ever ready to detect any inaccuracy in his workmen. "I warn the engraver," he said, "not to add an eyeball underneath when I do not draw one. As to the nose, these two are mine,"—here he draws a nose in front and in profile,—"I will not have the nose of Utagawa." The greatest difference exists in the beauty and colouring of the impressions, and the amateur, in his search for Ukiyo-ye gems, should not trust his unaided judgment.

M. Louis Gonse said of the surimonos, "To me they are the most seductive morsels of Japanese art." They are small, oblong prints, composed as programmes for festive occasions with a text of verse enriched by exquisite illustration. The surimono of Hokusai showed the influence of Tosa, the decoration being very elaborate, and delicate as a Persian miniature. In places, the surface of the print is goffered for ornament in relief, and the colouring is enforced by inlaying in gold, silver, bronze and tin.

Some of the best examples of Hokusai's art are the "Waterfalls," the "Bridges," "Thirty-six Views of Fuji," the "Gwafu," the "Hundred Views of Fuji" (of which the finest edition was brought out in London with a commentary by Mr. F.V. Dickins), and the fifteen volumes of the "Mang-wa,"—a term hardly translatable, but signifying fugitive sketches, or drawing as it comes, spontaneously. The preface best gives us the intention of the master.

"Under the roof of Boksenn, in Nagoya, he dreamed and drew some three hundred compositions. The things of Heaven and of



A River Scene.
By Hok'kei,
the faithful pupil of
Hokusai, who strove
to follow in the
footsteps of the
Master.

Buddha, the life of men and women, even birds and beasts, plants and trees, he has included them all, and under his brush every phase and form of existence has arisen. The master has tried to give life to everything he has painted, and the joy and happiness so faithfully expressed in his work are a plain proof of his victory."

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Hokusai has been called the king of the artisans, and it was for them especially that he composed the drawings of Mang-wa. His influence is expressed in all their works: in the structure of the roofs of temples, in houses and their interiors; upon the things of everyday life, as upon flowers and landscapes, upon lacquer, inros and netsukis, bronzes and ivory.

Gustave Geffroy truly gauged the genius of Hokusai in speaking of his "flights beyond the horizon." In the master we recognize the creator. He feels the mystery of the birth of mountains, as in that weird composition of Fuji, where the great cone is seen rising above circle upon circle of serpentine coils, forming the mystic tomoyé,— symbol of creation and eternity. He feels the pulsation of the universe, and the life of ocean, and in a frenzy of creative power, beneath his hand the curved crests of foaming waves break into life, flashing into countless sea-birds born of the froth of ocean. He is the painter of chimera, the prophet of cataclysm; he "gives the world a shake and invents chaos."

How vivid is Holmes' description of the wave in the seventh Mang-wa!

"Man becomes a mere insect, crouching in his frail catamaran, as the giant billow topples and shakes far above him. The convention of black lines with which he represents falling rain is as effectual as his conventions

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for water are fanciful. The storm of Rembrandt, of Rubens, or of Turner, is often terrible but never really wet; Constable gets the effect of wetness, but his storms are not terrible. Hokusai knows how a gale lashes water into foam, and bows the tree before it; how the gusts blow the people hither and thither, how sheets of drenching rain half veil a landscape, how the great white cone of his beloved Fuji gleams through a steady downpour! His lightning is rather odd in comparison with the realistic studies of the great artists of Europe, but what European ever tried an effect so stupendous as that recorded in 'Fugaku Hiak'kei,' where the snowy top of Fuji is seen at evening, crimson with the last fiery rays of sunset, while all the flanks of the mountain are hidden by a dark storm-cloud, through which the lightning flashes!"

Poetry and art are ever allied, and the vibrations of genius encircle the globe. Byron and Ruskin and Hokusai were contemporaries. Possibly at the very moment when the poet was immortalizing himself by composing his "Storm in the Alps," the grand "old man, mad about drawing," was sketching the peerless mountain:—

"Far along
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the loud thunder! not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud."

Lord Byron's vivid pen also best describes the squally storms of both Hiroshige and Hokusai,— where

"The big rain comes dancing to the earth."

Was not Hokusai truly "a portion of the tempest"? as he represents himself, drawing Fuji, in winter, working in a frenzy of haste,—for the ground is covered with snow—two brushes in his hand, and wonder of wonders! one held between his toes. This picture, also from "The Hundred Views of Fuji," prefaces Marcus B. Huish's work on Japanese art.

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The closing scene in the drama of Hokusai's life is full of pathos. Though his whole career had been shadowed by poverty, and shrouded in obscurity, his art still held him earth-bound. Upon his death-bed he said, "If Heaven would only grant me ten more years!" Then, as he realized that the end approached, he murmured, "If Heaven had but granted me five more years I could have been a real painter."

So ended the life of the master of Ukiyo-ye. His body lies beneath the pines of Asakusa, but would we not gladly believe that his "soul turned Will-o'-the-wisp, may ever come and go at ease, over the summer fields,"—for this was the last expression of his passionate desire.

Hiroshige.

Landscape Painter and Apostle of Impressionism.

IF THE lovely "Land of the Rising Sun" should, during one of those volcanic throes which threaten her extinction, sink forever beneath the depths of ocean, she would yet live for us through the magic brush of Hiroshige. Gazing at his landscapes, the airy wing of imagination wafts us to a land of showers and sunsets — a fairy scene, where the rainbow falls to earth, shattered into a thousand prisms — where waters softly flow towards horizons touched with daffodil or azure tinted.

Here is a gliding *sampan* with closed shutters. Inside, the lantern's diffused light throws a silhouette upon the bamboo curtain, a drooping girlish head bending towards the unseen lover at her feet. Ripples play upon the water, stirred by the amorous breath of oriental night. In fancy we hear the tinkling of the samisen, touched by delicate fingers, sweetly perfumed.

Now we see rain upon the Tokaido. A skurrying storm. Affrighted coolies running this way and that. A mountain full of echoes and horror. Down it splash rivulets, running into inky pools. Darkness and terror and loneliness, and longing for warmth and shelter and the peace of home.

In marked contrast is one of the "Seven Impressions of Hakone." A glad reveille. The sun breaks out, the clouds have burst asunder, masses of vapour float here and there. All is chaotic, untamed, a palette wildly mingled.

The Japanese so dearly love Nature, in all her moods, that when she dons her mantle of snow they hesitate, even when necessity compels,

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In the Mist.
By Hiroshige II.

廣重畫

to sully its purity. In one of Utamaro's prints, sweetly entitled by M. Edmond de Goncourt "La Nature Argentée," a little musume is seen searching the snowy landscape she loves, and, hating to blot the beautiful carpet, she cries, "Oh, the beautiful new snow! Where shall I throw the tea-leaves?" With Hiroshige, the artist of snow and mist, we feel this love, and so successfully does he deal with a snowy landscape that we see the snow in masses, luminous, soft and unsullied, as if Nature had lent a helping hand to portray her pure white magic. So, without formula or technique, but absolutely and sincerely, he unrolls the winter pageant before us.

Hiroshige.

The Japanese landscape painter sums up nature in broad lines, to which all details are more or less subordinated. This rendering of the momentary vision of life and light,—the spirit, not the letter of the scene,—is what is meant by Impressionism. Whereas, however the French impressionists expressed light by modelling surfaces, the Japanese adhere rigidly to line, and rely upon gradations of colour and the effect of washes to produce the illusion of light. Their landscape is expressed in clear-cut lines and flat masses of colour. In the prints this virtue of abstract line is exemplified, the outline being the essential element of the composition, for upon line and arrangements of balanced colour the artist must depend, cramped as he is by the necessities of the wood-cut. And here he displays his wonderful ingenuity, his fineness of gradations and opposition, his boldness and infinity of device, and in spite of the limitations which hamper him, he realizes absolute values in the narrowest range, by virtue of his knowledge of lines and spaces.

"No scientifically taught artist," said Jarves, "can get into as few square inches of paper a more distinct realization of space, distance,

atmosphere, perspective and landscape generally, not to mention sentiment and feeling."

Hiroshige.

This virtue of the line is the inheritance of the Japanese, the consummate handling of the brush almost a racial instinct. From China, far back in the centuries, came the sweeping calligraphic stroke, of which in Japan the school of Kano became the noblest exponent. "*L'école,*" said M. de Goncourt, "*des audaces et de la bravoure du faire, l'école tantôt aux ecrasements du pinceau, tantôt aux tenuités d'un cheveu.*"

As soon as the tiny hand of the Japanese baby can grasp the brush its art education begins. The brush is the Japanese alphabet — it is their fairy wand, their playmate — they learn to paint intuitively, though later the most assiduous study is given to acquire the characteristic touch of the school with which they affiliate. The brush is their *genie*, subservient to their imagination; they master and "juggle" with it. For no foreign taught technique will they barter their birthright.

And our masters and instructors in art more and more recognize the value of initial brush-work. The following excerpt from Walter Crane, in *Line and Form*, might serve as a preface to a work on Hokusai or Hiroshige: "The practice of forming letters with the brush afforded a very good preliminary practice to a student of line and form. An important attribute of line is its power of expressing or suggesting movement. Undulating lines always suggest action and unrest or the resistance of force of some kind. The firm-set yet soft feathers of a bird must be rendered by a different touch from the shining scales of a fish. The hair and horns of animals, delicate human features, flowers, the sinuous lines of drapery, or the massive folds of heavy robes, all demand

from the draughtsman in line different kinds of suggestive expression."

Hiroshige.

We are told that Hiroshige began his career by making pictures in coloured sands on an adhesive background, to amuse the public, and perhaps this artistic juggling helped him later in arranging his schemes of colour, for the limitations of the block demanded almost equal simplicity in composition.

The impressions of Lake Biwa, one of Hiroshige's finest series of views, serve as a beautiful illustration of the almost exclusive use of line in bringing out the salient characteristics of the landscape. His sweeping brush shows us volcanic mountains, encircling the lake, like rocky billows, torn and jagged, for legend says that as the peerless mountain Fuji-san rose in one night, so the ground sank, and the space was filled by the beautiful lake named from its resemblance in form to the Japanese lute. The trees which fringe the shore, black and misty, upon close inspection resolve themselves into a network of criss-cross lines and blotches. The sampans' sails, the waves, the rushes on the shore, the roofs of the village nestling beneath the cliffs, are all adroitly rendered by horizontal lines and skillful zigzags. The rest of the composition is a wash of shaded blues and grays, fading towards the horizon into smoky violets.

Biwa, the beautiful, suggestive of mystery, the four-stringed lute gives thee her name. Through the music of thy rippling eddies do sighs well up in thee, the murmur of the lost? A pall of darkness hovers over thee, pierced by a gleam of sunshine, beckoning like a lover's hand.

It is matter for astonishment that the Japanese seem unable to clear away the mists of uncertainty which shroud the personality of the artist or artists who designed the impressions signed "Hiroshige," and it is

Hiroshige.

greatly to be regretted that from lack of proper inquiry the opportunity of accurately placing the work of each artist of the group has been lost. The consensus of opinion assigns to the first Hiroshige most of the horizontal landscapes, the narrow panels of birds and flowers and the fish series. The upright panels are ascribed to the second Hiroshige and adopted son of the first artist, who used a thicker signature, whilst the figures with landscape backgrounds are supposed to be by a third artist of the name. All three men worked together, however, so that any impression signed with their name is the result of collaboration. Very little authentic information can be gleaned with regard to the life of the first Hiroshige, and there are no illuminating flashes thrown upon his career, as in the prefaces of Hokusai, whose patient life of poverty and devotion to art are so well known. Nor did Hiroshige, like Hokusai and Utamaro, portray himself in his impressions.

Utamaro loved thus to represent himself, and in one of his beautiful prints, showing a night fête in a garden of the Yoshiwara, the artist of beauty appears, the sober distinction of his costume heightened by contrast with the brilliancy of the gay butterflies that surround him. His upper robe is black, and upon each shoulder, like fallen petals, are little yellow discs which reveal his identity, for one encloses the ideograph "Uta," the other, "Maro." Upon the pillar, against which he leans theatrically, is a satirical verse, tersely expressed in measured syllables, termed "Kioka," which affirms that by special request the artist presents "his own, his elegant visage!"

The best known prints by Hiroshige are the "Fifty-three Stations between Yedo and Kyoto." This Tokaido series was at first beautifully

printed, but the later impressions show a sad decay in the colouring. The "Yedo Hiak'kei," or "Hundred Views of Yedo," give a panoramic vista of the Shoguns' capital. The pictorial description of Yedo, in black and pale blue, is a lovely series. In many of these landscapes the Dutch influence is very marked, for the master of Hiroshige, Toyohiro, from whom he derived the first syllable of his *nom de pinceau*, had experimented in landscape painting after the Dutch wood-cuts which were scattered throughout the country. Although Hiroshige is best known through his landscapes, he, like most Japanese painters, was too universal an artist to confine himself solely to one branch. He loved every phase of nature, and in one of his well-known prints, "The Eagle," his skill in the delineation of birds is best shown. In the later impressions a pale yellowish tone takes the place of the beautiful steel-blue background of the earlier prints, miracles of colour printing.

Hiroshige.

Athwart this background of ineffable blue, which loses itself in the mists that veil the sacred mountain, is seen, sweeping and sailing cruelly alert, the evil eagle of Hiroshige. His wicked gaze is set on nests of murmuring wood-doves, he eyes the callow sea-birds in their bed of rushes. The temple bell rings solemnly; the long vibrations cleave the azure dusk. It is the hour of rest and dreams. Begone base harbinger of evil!

In the early prints by Hiroshige the colours are most beautiful, one soft tone fading imperceptibly into another, the blues and greens so marvellously blended as to be almost interchangeable. We are told that Michelangelo loved the companionship of the old workman who ground his colours; and of the Japanese, it is said, "this making one

Hiroshige.

family of the greater artist and all who had to do with him has given that peculiar completeness, that sense of peace and absence of struggle which we feel in Japanese art."

In vain Hiroshige fought, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, against the introduction of cheap and inferior pigments, which were taking the place of the native dyes—Nature's gifts, distilled by her artist children. Reds, yellows, blues and greens, intense and crude, were now imported, and Western commercialism sapped the virtue of the sincere and devoted artists and artisans of the Orient.

In describing the effect of colour in one of the Nikko temples, W. B. Van Ingen throws a search-light upon the chemical secrets of this splendor, which he tells us, if asked to describe in one word, that word would be "golden." "These colours," he says, "are not imitations of colours. If vermilion is used, it is cinnabar and not commercialized vermilion which is employed, nor is something substituted for cobalt because it is cheaper and will 'do just as well.' Each colour is used because it is beautiful and frank as a colour, not because some other colour is beautiful. If lacquer is the best medium to display the beauty of the pigment, lacquer is used, and if water is better, lacquer is discarded, and if these colours are not imitations of colours, neither are they suggestions of colours. Pink is not used for red; if it is used at all, it is used for its own beauty, and feeble blush washes are not made to do service for blue. The Oriental has not yet learned the doctrine of substitution; he knows that substitution is transformation."

The secrets of colouring of the early prints, the joy of Parisian studios and which inspired Whistler, are lost. The delicious greens of old mosses, the pale rose tints, the veinings and marbellings, the iridescent

tints of ocean shells, the luminous colours of the anemone, the *bleus malades des mauves* — that divine violet, a benison of the palette handed down by those old Buddhist monks, the earliest painters of India and China. Hiroshige.

These visions of colour are taking the place of obscurity and gloom, for the great impressionists, Claude Monet, Manet, the Barbizon school also and its disciples, have abjured the old dark shadows and substituted violet washes, seeming to share the privilege with the saints and sages of "seeing blue everywhere." All true artists live "within the sphere of the infinite images of the soul." These seers are their own masters, and, as Theodore Child says so exquisitely, "they are of rare and special temperaments, and through their temperament they look at nature and see beautiful personal visions. They fix their visions in colour or marble and then disappear forever, carrying with them the secrets of their mysterious intellectual processes." Such a special temperament was bequeathed to Whistler. He submitted himself to the Japanese influence, not imitating but imbibing oriental methods, and following them, notwithstanding Philistine clamour, for the English art doctrines of the time were diametrically opposed to these innovations. Regardless of sneers, he followed the bent of his genius, which led him into oriental fields. He felt the sweet influence of such artists as Hokusai and Hiroshige. He took advantage of the centuries of thought given to drapery, in the land where, as with Greece, dress is a national problem; where no fads and follies of fashion fostered by commercialism are allowed; where the artists design dress, and the people gratefully and sincerely adopt their ideas.

When we can follow them and allow art to rule, then hideous vagaries and vulgarities, distortions of the figure by hoops and wires, and

Hiroshige.

monstrosities in sleeves will cease. Then may we hope to be an æsthetic nation. We need our American Moronobus to design and embroider and paint dresses for their beautiful and intuitively tasteful countrywomen.

The colour vision of the Oriental far surpasses our own. His eyes are sensitive to colour harmonies which, applied to landscape, at first seem unreal, impossible, until we realize that though they present objects in hues intrinsically foreign to them, yet the result justifies this arrangement, and its integrity is recognized, for the impression we receive is the true one. And this chaotic massing of colour we notice in a landscape by Hiroshige was employed by many of the old masters. Of the stormy passion of Tintoret, Ruskin says: "He involves his earth in coils of volcanic cloud, and withdraws through circle flaming above circle the distant light of paradise."

There is a keynote to art, as to music, and to genius; through the inner vision this harmony is revealed. It lies within the precincts of the soul, beyond the reach of talented mediocrity, however versed in the canon of art. Nor can this occult gift be handed down. The most ardent disciples of Raphael tried in vain to express themselves after his pattern. The sublime inspiration which found its fullest outward manifestation in the Sistine Madonna rested there. The poets realized this colour vision, for Dante cried—

"Had I a tongue in eloquence as rich
As is the colouring in Fancy's loom."

Inspiration must be sought by other than mechanical means. Have not the most inspired revelations of colour come to the great master, William Keith, when, invoking the aid of that old temple bell, its lingering

vibrations yielded to him rich secrets of colour harmony, as the song of the bell revealed to the soul of Schiller the mystery of life and birth and death, which he crystallized in his immortal poem?

Hiroshige.

This is the keynote of Impressionism, the touchstone of art. What a fairy wand was wafted by Whistler, standing upon Battersea Bridge! "The evening mist," he said, "clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become Campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairyland is before us!"

Leaning upon the bridge, the sweet influence of Hiroshige permeating his soul, in the crucible of his fancy he blent with the radiant Orient a vision of old London, grimy and age-worn, and realized "a Japanese fancy on the banks of the gray Thames." To this picture he set the seal of his brother artist, and so the two apostles of Impressionism, Occidental and Oriental, in that loveliest nocturne, will together go down to posterity.

Analytical Comparisons

between the Masters of Ukiyo-ye.

IT IS difficult rightly to determine the distinguishing characteristics of the noted artists of Ukiyo-ye: but the connoisseurs speak of the extreme grace of pictorial line in Moronobu: the sweeping areas of pattern in the garments of Kiyonobu and his followers, and their forceful ways of outlining the folds of drapery, all full of meaning.

Grace and delicacy mark the idyllic compositions of Harunobu and his successor Koriusai (the face of the Japanese woman is the face of Harunobu, Koriusai, Shunsho and his school). M. de Goncourt says: "The Japanese woman is little, little, and rounded. Out of this woman Utamaro created the slender, svelte woman of his prints,—a woman who has the delicate outlines of an early Watteau sketch. Before Utamaro, Kiyonaga had drawn women, larger than nature, but fleshy and thick. The face of the ordinary Japanese woman is short and squat, and except for the inexpressible vivacity and sweetness of the black eyes it is the face which Harunobu, Koriusai and Shunsho represented. Out of this face Utamaro created a long oval. He slid into the traditional treatment of the features a mutinous grace, a naïve astonishment, a spiritual comprehension; and he was the first artist who attempted, while preserving the consecrated traditional lines, to blend with them a human expression, so that his best prints become real portraits. Studying them, we no longer see only the universal, but the individual face, and, unlike the other Japanese artists, he idealizes his countrywoman through the mimicry of her gracious humanity."

Analytical Comparisons.

The women of Kiyonaga have a more than human dignity and grace, the classic folds of his drapery recalling figures of the Renaissance. The Japanese artist always has an underlying motive in the disposition of his drapery. The most recognizable perhaps are those called "Guantai," signifying rude, with angular outlines, and "Rintai," delicate, supple and wavy, like the undulations of a river.

In the "Guantai" motive we see the angles of the rocks, even in the most delicate folds of drapery. In "Rintai" no angle is visible. Here wavelike ripples descend, flowing around the feet of the wearer. In these swirls of drapery are realized the Buddhist conception of Life in everything,— the lines are moving, sentient, and all but the leading folds that determine the lines of the figure are suppressed. The Japanese painter knows that the true master selects, does not draw all he sees, but concentrates his efforts towards reproducing the lines of movement, and in figures, the lines of the limbs and flowing drapery. In their designs for dresses the artists of Ukiyo-ye emphasized the theorem that art is the love of certain balanced relations and proportions, for they planned dresses in which every separate part is welded into one harmonious whole. They solved theories in colour, and delighted in selecting as trials for their skill the most unmanageable patterns, such as plaids and checks. They extolled "Notan" or the decorative use of values.

In the best prints the decoration of the dress fits in with the scheme of the picture. M. de Goncourt says: "If the figures are represented out of doors, flowers seem to be shed upon the dresses, as if the wearer passed beneath blossoming trees. If the artist paints butterflies on a costume, they harmonize with the background. If peonies are used he

Analytical Comparisons.

alternates their whiteness with a purple tint. And how admirable is their use of relief! Upon a blue or mauve gown, how charming is the white relief of an embossed cherry petal, and so marvellously executed is this goffering, that many of the oldest impressions retain the impression as perfectly as if only printed yesterday." Utamaro at first equalled Kiyonaga in the majesty of his figures, later he lost beauty and strength in exaggeration. Yeishi shows a striking resemblance to Utamaro, and he, too, followed after Kiyonaga: his studies of women are noted for their refined elegance. Yeisen compares with Utamaro in the grace with which he portrays women, and Yeizan's lines are stronger, but show a marked similarity. Hartmann says: "The linear beauties of the representations of Yeizan, Yeishi, Yeisen, impress one like a Nautch, like some languid oriental dance in which the bodies undulate with an almost imperceptible vibration. The Japanese see in a woman, a glorification of all beautiful things — they even study the natural grace of the willow, plum and cherry trees, to find the correct expression of her movements."

Toyokuni was the master of mimetic art. In his actor faces he runs the gamut of emotion,— jealousy, passion, fiendish fury and concentrated cunning, rush at us from his prints. Toyokuni, the Marionette maker, forced life into the forms of his puppets, and later the same power is shown in his designs for the block. Like many of the Ukiyo-ye artists, he employs caricature, but his figures are living, sentient.

M. de Goncourt says: "In comparing two books by Utamaro, and Toyokuni, illustrating the occupations of the women of the Yoshiwara Toyokuni, often the equal of Utamaro in his triptychs is beaten by his rival. His women have not the elegance, the willowy grace, the figures

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The Actor Kikugoro.
By Toyokuni I,
the great
Actor-Designer and
Master of Mimetic
Art.

豊国画

of Utamaro possess, nor their resplendent personality. His pictures lack the spirit, the life, the 'trick' of voluptuousness of the women of the 'Flower Quarter.' Then the comic note which Toyokuni sought for in representing these scenes, adds triviality to his work. In short, to judge between the rival painters, one has only to place side by side a woman painted by Utamaro and one by Toyokuni. The first is a little marvel, the second only a commonplace print." Kunisada followed in the footsteps of his master Toyokuni, adding charming backgrounds, which he borrowed from Hiroshige; in fact, the Hiroshige are said to have supplied many backgrounds to the prints of Kunisada and Kuniyoshi.

Analytical Comparisons.

Hokusai used all methods, acknowledged no school. His lines flowing out of the prescribed limits hint at vast stretches of country. Swirls of waves foam up in the impressions, supplying an alphabet of motion. In Mang-wa is blent sweetness and power, structure and the fundamental vital motive, underlying all art. When working for the engraver he was concise, rapid and impulsive, but when contemplating nature he sketched in freedom,—his execution became fairylike.

The landscapes of the Hiroshige, though confined to the narrow range of the wood-cut, have all the qualities of Impressionism, the details are subordinated, only the salient points of the scene being represented, but the atmosphere supplies what is lacking, and this incommunicable, subtle gift, the birthright of the artists, enabled them to conjure living pictures from the hard medium of the wooden block.

The following suggestive comparisons between the masters of Ukiyo-ye, kindly volunteered by Mr. Morgan Shepard, are full of value to the student, as the individual opinion of a refined amateur and art critic.

Analytical Comparisons.

Of Harunobu he says: "Though from the point of proportion his figures seem to lack technic, the naïve artlessness of his lines perfectly satisfies us. In this purpose of simplicity they almost suggest the qualities of the fresco work by the early Tuscan masters, when the spirit was striving for expression and working out individuality along its own spiritual lines. The vigour of his stroke impresses one as being untraditional.

"In the figure of the Dancer by Shunko, the pupil of Shunsho, we observe that, although through training and tradition the pupil has gained a greater facility, yet the simplicity of the master is lost in an excess of elaboration. The lines resemble those of Shunsho, though there is more uniformity of stroke, with a greater delicacy, but the simplicity of the first artist is merged in decorative purpose. Shunsho is distinctly simple and his lines have a blended quality of relation, giving a sense of repose which in the pupil is obscured by the tendency to elaborate.

"In epitomizing the cardinal qualities expressed in the Utamaro prints, the most marked is the suggestion of subjective, unconscious skill that gives no impress of the objective. Each line seems to come directly from the fountain-head of the man's spiritual or soul nature, though this very soul nature expresses itself often along sensual lines. Indeed, were the artist less of a spiritual genius, he would often become revoltingly sensual. To the casual observer the lines of Utamaro show wonderful facility, and still greater delicacy, yet we cannot but observe underlying all his art, especially in its later phases, this subtle sensuality. The lower draperies of the Utamaro figures have an almost insinuating fullness.

"The compositions of Yeishi, upon superficial study, suggest marked facility and even some originality in line composition, with here and there

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The Snowstorm.
By Kitugawa Yeizan.

菊川英山筆

an eccentricity which gives character to his treatment. The lines seem to be invariably broad and openly expressed. They lack the strong personality and vigorous treatment of Hokusai, the suggestive delicacy and voluptuousness of Utamaro, but seem to embody the vigorous calligraphic stroke of Kiyonaga. We can place Yeishi upon a plane of individuality because of his sensitive temperament which seemed to be influenced by his environment and his master teacher. This varied individuality was accompanied by a tendency towards imitation, yet a generous discrimination would concede to him facility, technic, refinement and rare judgment.

Analytical Comparisons.

"The lines of Toyokuni show technical skill, and his calligraphic stroke is simple and vigorous, yet he lacks the spiritual and suggestive delicacy of Utamaro, giving the impression that externalities influenced him, rather than the finer shades of artistic interpretation. His best work is histrionic and is full of individuality, breaking through the traditional stage attitudes, which impressed the artists who developed along his lines.

"Yeizan's treatment is peculiarly his own, having a simplicity almost amounting to awkwardness expressed in a reserve of treatment. The casual observer is impressed by a sense of incompleteness, but this is overcome when the simple harmony of the lines is noted. Yeizan invariably breaks loose from his first reserve. Beginning very carefully he gradually loses his constraint, and the lower part of his drapery shows greater impulse of treatment.

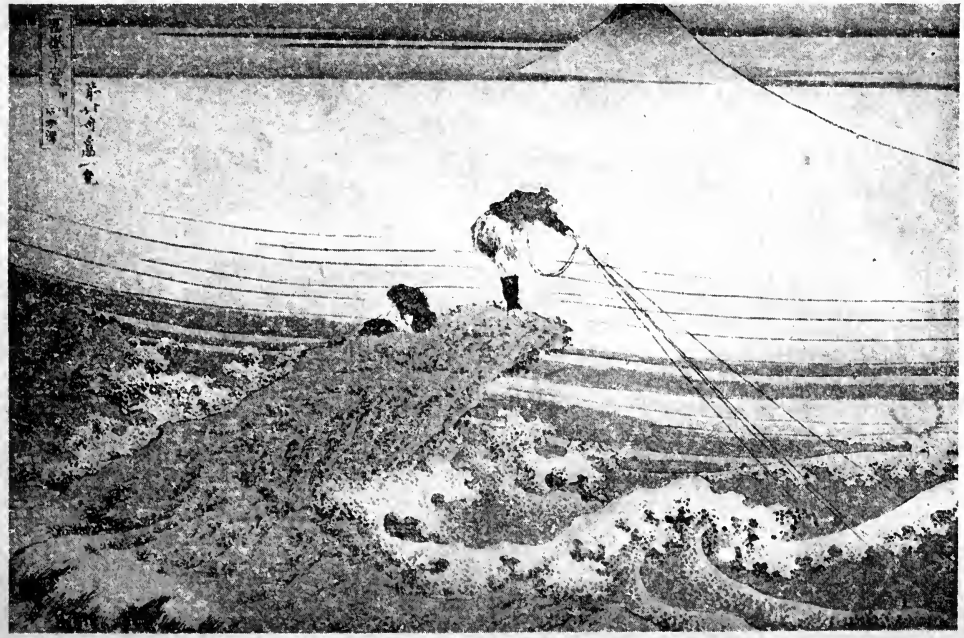
"The work of Yeisen, showing much of Utamaro's facility, with a touch of the vigour of Kiyonaga, is yet distinctly conceived along traditional lines. It bears the strong impress of decorative sense, but nevertheless the lines, though simple and well controlled, show rather the

Analytical Comparisons.

finished master of technic than the originative mind. In Yeisen we are less conscious of that emanating quality of originality and forceful personality that we feel in Harunobu, Hokusai and Utamaro."

In analyzing the composition of the celebrated work by Hokusai, reproduced on the opposite page, Mr. Shepard comments: "In this, as in all Hokusai's pictures, we note the combination of vigour and gentleness, characteristic aggression and insinuating suggestion, an absolutely masterly touch, and yet painstaking in minutiæ; on the other hand, an utter indifference to detail, suggesting that no thought of it is involved. The poise of the figure is admirable and absolutely satisfying in all matters of drawing. The treatment of the waves, which are peculiarly characteristic of the master's touch, in their foamy sputter suggest a comparison with the strength of Hiroshige's huge billows, majestic in their oily smoothness and sweeping grace. Giving the impression of the middle distance, the artist has delicately approached, with the most wonderful ease, the vapory suggestion of the distant mountain line. He slips from the vigour of the foreground with a parallel stroke of astonishing freedom, seeming almost to remain poised, so that we reach without violence the faintly suggested distance as if we had unconsciously slid from reality into dreamland, unknowing of the transition. Hokusai possesses a masterly technic, a characteristic vigour, imagination, delicacy ofttimes opposed by a brutal ruggedness, and above all a pervading sense of humour."

One of the
Thirty-six Views of
Mount Fuji.
By Hokusai.



Hints to Collectors

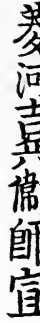
of Ukiyo-ye Gems.

TO TRULY appreciate Japanese prints, a knowledge of the language of the block must first be acquired, then the pursuit has an indescribable charm, inexplicable excepting to the initiated, but to those who have fallen under the spell, the love of Ukiyo-ye gems becomes a veritable passion. The collector of old prints must be guided in his selection by the quality of the paper, which should be soft and vibrant, the fibrous tentacles upon its surface often forming shadows where it has been exposed to the dust. The register must be perfect, each colour being confined absolutely to its prescribed space. Perfection in the register is an infallible guide, and prints with a perfect register will increase in value. The colours must be soft and melting, in many cases one tone shading into another, not harshly determined by the lines of the block, as in even the most beautiful reproductions. The florid colouring of the later impressions by the Hiroshige are notable examples of the deterioration caused by the use of cheap pigments and the haste of the printer who had to supply the increasing demand for cheap pictures.

There are often exquisite examples of colouring to be found among the later impressions from the old blocks, but the lovely colours and nuances of colours conjured by the artists, designers and printers in loving collaboration, before commercialism had invaded Japan, can never be seen again, even as the disciples of William Morris seem unable to reproduce the beautiful shades which the genius of the master workman evolved from the dyeing-vat.

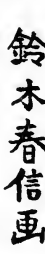
Fac-similes

of the most famous Signatures of Ukiyo-ye Artists.

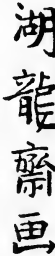


Hishikawa Moronobu.
1643-1711-13.

Okumura Masanobu.
1690-1720.



Suzuki Harunobu.
1747-1818.

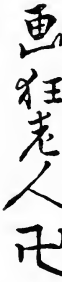


Koriusai.
1760.

Shunsho.
Died 1792.

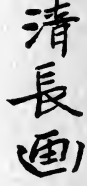
Iitsu (Hokusai).
1760-1849.

Hokusai.
1760-1849.



Gakio Rojin Manji
(Hokusai). 1760-1849.

Hok'kei.
1780-1856-9.



Kiyonaga.
Died 1814.

Utamaro.
1754-1806.

Toyokuni.
1768-1825.

Kikugawa Yeizan.
Flourished 1810-30.

Kunisada.
1785-1864.

Keisai Yeisen.
1790-1848.

Kuniyoshi.
1800-1861.

Hiroshige I.
1793-1858-60.

Hiroshige II.
1793-1858-60.

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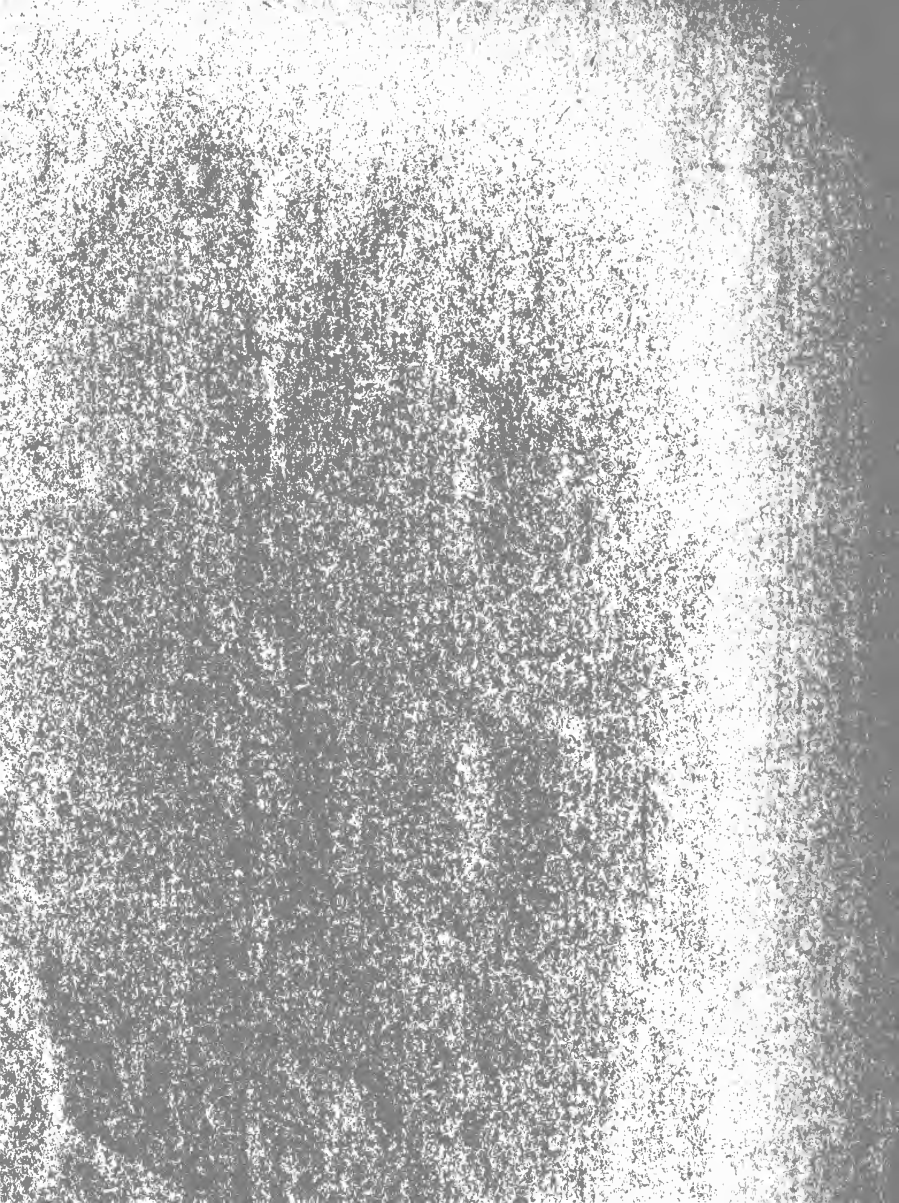

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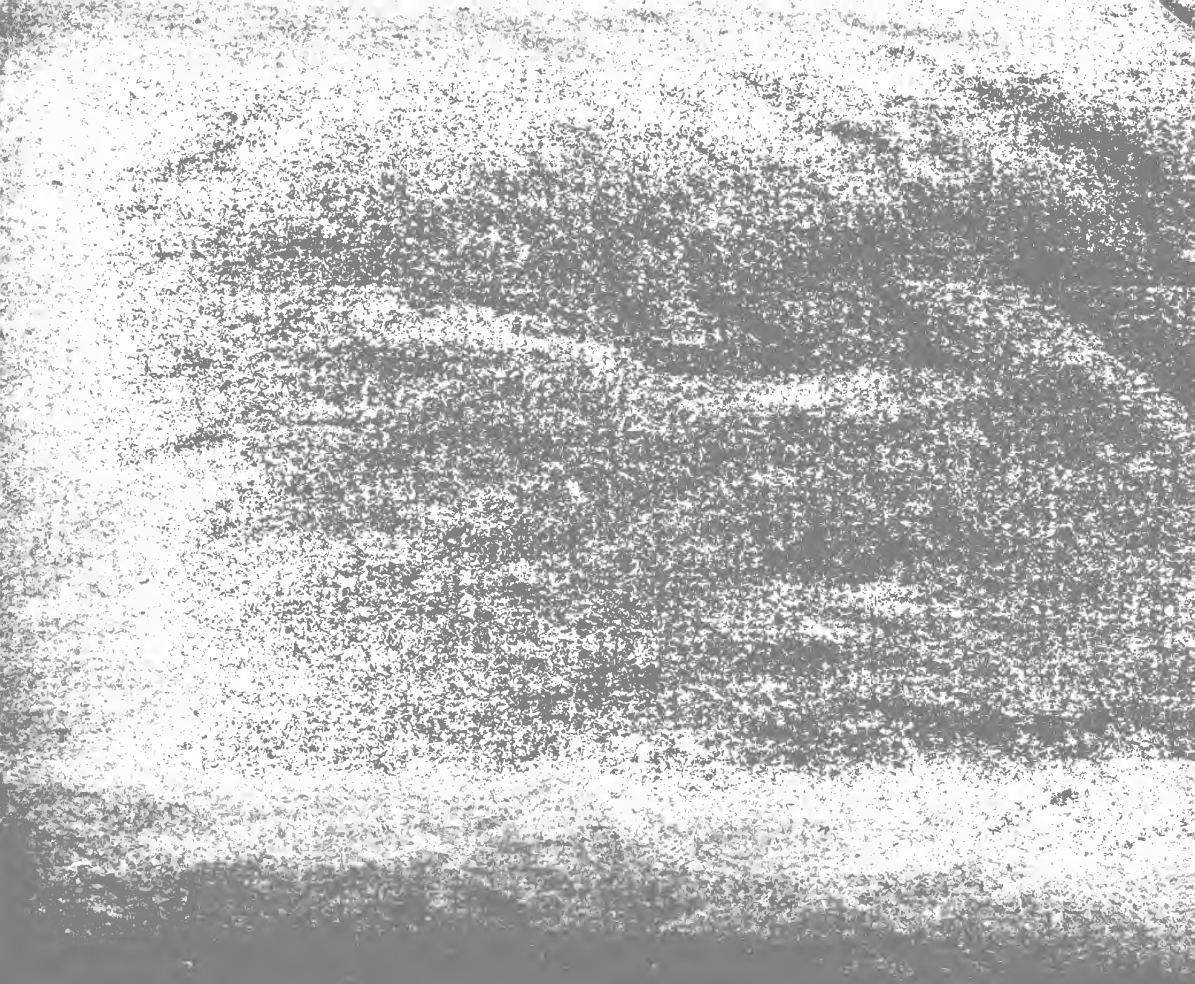
On the reverse.

Surimono:
The Ride of the Warrior Miura Kenisuke.
The inscription is a Poem
he composed before setting out
for Corea.
By Yanagawa Shigenobu, the Son-in-law
of Hokusai.